

ŽIŽEK ON THE NEW SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM • MURDER IN OAXACA

JULY 2008

IN THESE TIMES

MAN WITH A PLAN

Obama is mobilizing new
voters. Lots of them.

ADAM DOSTER REPORTS

PLUS:

Dismantling the
myth of McCain

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The uprising we've all been waiting for has already started.

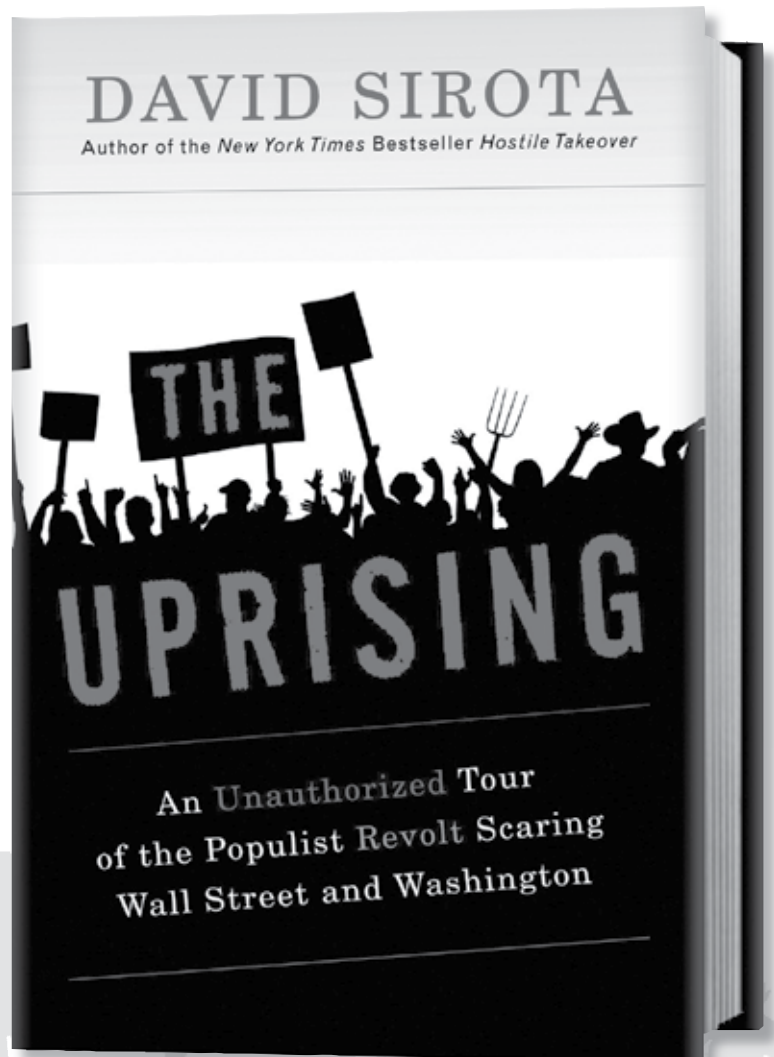
Job outsourcing. Perpetual busy signals at government agencies. Slashed paychecks. Stolen elections. A war without end, fatally mismanaged. Ordinary Americans on both the Right and Left have had it with corrupt politicians of both parties and are organizing to change the status quo. In his invigorating new book, David Sirota investigates whether this uprising can be transformed into a unified, lasting political movement.

“David Sirota is the most important progressive voice we have in this country.”

—**MATT TAIBBI**, national political correspondent for *Rolling Stone*

“David Sirota is a clear-headed and principled hell-raiser for economic justice.”

—**NAOMI KLEIN**, author of *No Logo* and *The Shock Doctrine*



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 CROWN

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Bush's Selective Mourning

THE FOURTH OF July is the time for patriotic hoohah by national poobahs. So, Commander-in-Chief George W. Bush will no doubt invoke, as he did on Memorial Day at Arlington Cemetery, the "sacrifice" of that "awesome bunch of people."

"It only remains for us," said Bush that day, "the heirs of their legacy, to have the courage and the character to follow their lead—and to preserve America as the greatest nation on earth and the last best hope for mankind."

Bush then dressed up his war with tales of the fallen.

Nate Hardy of Durham, N.H., and Mike Koch of State College, Pa., according to Bush, would "head into battle with American flags clutched to their chests underneath their uniform." Nate and Mike "both laid down their lives in Iraq after being ambushed by terrorists," and today "lay at rest next to each other."

Ron Tucker of Fountain, Colo., as a young man, was "known for having an infectious smile and a prankster's sense of humor," but the military "transformed" him "into a devoted soldier and dutiful son who called his mother every day."

"He worked with other members of his unit to build a soccer field for Iraqi children," said Bush. "As he drove back to his base, an enemy bomb robbed him of his life."

But other victims of his war didn't merit the president's notice.

Jeffrey Lucey returned from Iraq in 2003 but could not get treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the Veterans Health Administration. On June 22, 2004, his father Kevin found him hanging from the basement rafters, a garden hose around his neck.

"Neither our veterans nor their families should have to beg for the care they deserve," his mother Joyce testified at the Winter Soldier hearings in March. "Our

marine physically returned to us, but his soul did not. He lost it in Iraq."

Timothy Bowman returned from Iraq in 2005. As his family was busy preparing the 2005 Thanksgiving meal, Timothy shot himself and slowly bled to death.

Tommie Edward Jones committed suicide in front of his mother Dorothy, on March 25, at Fort Carson, Colo. She told reporters, "He said, 'I wake up every morning angry.' He said, 'My body is here but my mind is in Iraq.'"

Veterans like Jeffrey, Timothy and Tommie kill themselves at an astonishing rate.

Dr. Ira Katz, the head of mental health at Veterans Affairs, wrote in a Feb. 13 e-mail to a colleague: "Shh! Our suicide prevention coordinators are identifying about 1,000 suicide attempts per month among veterans we see in our medical facilities. Is this something we should (carefully) address ourselves in some sort of release before someone stumbles on it?"

Too late. That e-mail saw the light of day in April as part of a class-action lawsuit filled against the VA in San Francisco.

For men and women in uniform, the rate is even higher than that of veterans. The Army reports that about 2,100 enlisted soldiers attempted suicide in 2007—only 350 did so in 2002 before the war began. How many succeeded in killing themselves was not revealed.

Young Americans are sent off to war and are killed by roadside bombs. Young Americans return home from war and kill themselves. Whatever.

They "have made the ultimate sacrifice that allows a free civilization to endure and flourish," said a "humbled" Bush.

On July 4, as fireworks explode, triggers are pulled and Bush blathers, let us remember the lines from writer Bertolt Brecht: "Everyone sees you hiding the hem of your mantle, which is bloody with the blood of your best sons."

—Joel Bleifuss

IN THESE TIMES

"With liberty and justice for all..."

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mixed reaction

JUST THE FACTS



\$137 Price of a barrel of oil in early June, a record high

\$1.59 Average U.S. price of a gallon of gas in January 2000, before Bush took office

\$40 ExxonMobil's profits in 2007, in billions

23 Number of hours a minimum wage employee in the United States must work to buy one barrel of oil at its record high

“

Kick ass! If somebody tries to stop the march to democracy, we will seek them out and kill them! We must be tougher than hell! This Vietnam stuff, this is not even close. It is a mindset. We can't send that message. It's an excuse to prepare us for withdrawal.

”

—PRESIDENT BUSH, AFTER HEARING NEWS OF THE CONTRACTOR DEATHS IN FALLUJAH IN 2004, ACCORDING TO RETIRED LT. GEN. RICARDO SANCHEZ'S NEW BOOK

LABANARAMA BY TERRY LABAN



QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

On its surface, the Group Health Plan Prosthetics Parity Act hardly seems objectionable. The House bill would require insurance companies to provide broader coverage for prosthetic limbs, breasts and other artificial body parts, along the lines of what they provide for other medical coverage. With some 130,000 Americans in need of prosthetic devices each year, the legislation sounds reasonable.

THE QUO:

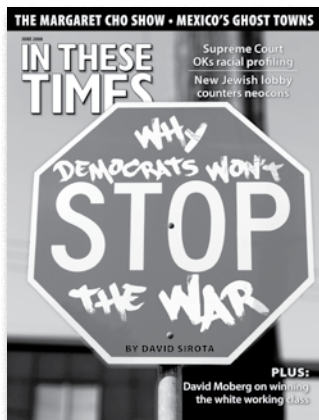
The problem is that all of the bill's five co-sponsors have received significant campaign contributions from the PAC representing Hanger Orthopedic Group, a prosthetics company that would profit if the bill becomes law.

Most brow-raising is that Reps., and brothers, Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) received a combined \$10,000 in contributions only weeks before they signed on to



support the legislation on March 13. Though both Diaz-Balarts face tough elections this fall, they aren't known for their interest in healthcare issues.

letters



Ambivalent peaceniks

Senior Editor David Sirota seems infected by the same “insider” viewpoint that he decries in Democratic politicians (“Why Democrats Can’t Stop the War,” June). The truth is that their waffling reflects the ambivalence of their constituents.

Sirota refers to polls that show two-thirds of the public wanting withdrawal from Iraq, but other polls show great reluctance to accept the appearance of defeat, or responsibility for accelerated violence in the absence of U.S. troops. They want out, but they don’t want national disgrace.

Pacifism and anti-imperialism have always been marginal, radical tendencies in U.S. politics. Most Americans enjoy war as long as they win. Few are willing to give up military superiority and U.S. world “leadership.”

The only way to wean this country from war is for it to be soundly beaten. But nobody can win an election advocating that.

Chris Nielsen
Shoreline, Wash.

David Sirota gets the peace movement wrong.

Sirota comes away with the idea that the peace movement never tries to play inside ball, never works with Congress members, never engages in electoral politics, but rather simply holds marches.

Sirota criticizes the pseudo peace movement, the monied campaigns that use peace as an electoral issue and whose marches only allow those carrying approved posters. This

The only way to wean this country
from war is for it to be soundly beaten.
But nobody can win an election
advocating that.

lets Sirota churn out his usual boilerplate on the need for real grassroots work.

But Sirota misses the point when he supposes that the purpose of these pseudo peace groups is peace. Nonsense.

The purpose of these groups is to use the issue of war and peace to get Democrats elected. These groups are “Players” not because they play inside strategic politics, but because they dump money into ads on the corporate media—Sirota’s only source of information—which then covers them as “the peace movement.”

The same groups wisely refrain from investing money in any media outlets that might actually promote peace, including *In These Times*. Had they done so, *In These Times* might have been able to afford a reporter to report

on the peace movement.

David Swanson
Via E-mail

Rights at Gitmo matter

I’d like to thank columnist Candace Gorman for continuing to fight for the rights of prisoners held at Guantánamo.

But in her June column (“A Kinder, Gentler Torture”), Gorman wrote that the American people no longer want to hear about the kind of abuses being carried out at Guantánamo.

and ashamed at what “our” government is doing.

Please know that there are many American people who support your efforts and are doing what we can to bring America back to its senses and its principles.

Linda Sleffel
Columbus, Ohio

CORRECTION

In “Dirty Smoke Signals” (May), we mistakenly reported that the Black Mesa coal mine is located east of Phoenix. It is roughly 300 miles north.

Also, the Mohave Generating Station near Laughlin, Nev., was shut down in 2006 as the result of a consent decree with environmental groups (not because of action from the Environmental Protection Agency, as reported).

We regret the errors.

INTHESETIMES.COM



Is *The Onion* a progressive political force? In *The New Blue Media*, excerpted on InTheseTimes.com, author Theodore Hamm argues that when historians look back at this decade, they’ll see the satirical weekly as “one of the most accurate contemporary portrayals of what the Bush regime was truly about.”



Ken Brociner’s biweekly column, “The American Left,” is generating impassioned responses from readers. Replying to the column (about what Sen. Barack Obama can learn from McGovern’s failed 1972 presidential bid), “scorp” wrote: “The further left [a candidate] is, the worse he will do in the general election. And Obama is the leftmost candidate for president since McGovern, at least.”



contributors

Dear Reader,

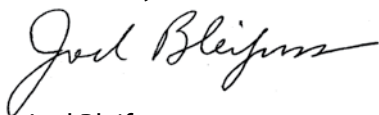
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Yours Truly,



Joel Bleifuss
Editor & Publisher

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BILL STAMETS is a Chicago-based freelance writer who once took 10 grad school courses in anthropology at the University of Chicago.



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URIEL SINA/GETTY IMAGES

These melting icecaps in Greenland might take issue with the AP textbook *American Government's* assertion that global warming is not "deserving of support."

A Textbook Case

AP students learn ABCs of right-wing talking points

BY KATE SHEPPARD

IT IS A FOOLISH politician who today opposes environmentalism. And that creates a problem, because not all environmental issues are equally deserving of support. Take the case of global warming."

This quote might sound like it's from the conservative Heritage Foundation's handbook, or a speech by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), Congress' infamous global warming denier. But it's not—it's from the most popular American government textbook in the country, and it's being taught in hundreds of high schools and colleges.

The line—from *American Government*, by conservative scholars James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio Jr.—goes on to describe the environmental movement

as "entrepreneurial politics."

Wilson is the Ronald Reagan Professor of Public Policy at Pepperdine University and chairman of the American Enterprise Institute's Council of Academic Advisers. DiIulio is a University of Pennsylvania political science professor and former director of the Bush administration's faith-based initiatives.

The textbook's section on global warming continues: "The earth has become warmer, but is this mostly the result of natural climate changes, or is it heavily influenced by humans putting greenhouse gases into the air?" The science of global warming, the authors conclude, has created a "conflict among elites who often base their arguments on ideology as much as on facts."

Questions about the book's treatment of global warming arose in December, not from the book's editors, but from high school senior Matthew LaClair of Kearny, N.J. His Advanced Placement American Government class at Kearny High School uses the textbook, and he noted that it plays into conservative talking points that argue science is still divided on global warming.

"It's unfortunate that many of the students will read this stuff, and those who may not be aware of the factual errors are learning misinformation," says LaClair, 18, who made headlines in 2006 when he recorded a history teacher telling students that they'd be eternally damned if they didn't accept Christ. In addition he says, it leads "students to think that it's all those annoying activists who are making this stuff up."

The book tries to make global warming sound appealing: "On the one hand, a warmer globe will cause sea levels to rise, threatening coastal communities; on the other hand, greater warmth will make it easier and cheaper to grow crops and avoid high heating bills."

What's more, the book repeatedly claims that prayer in public schools is illegal when, in fact, it's state-sponsored prayer that the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional. And the book gives the wrong vote count for the 6-3 Supreme Court decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the 2003 ruling that overturned the Texas law that criminalized homosexuality.

Richard Blake, spokesperson for the book's publisher, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, refused to provide a specific figure for how many students use the textbooks, saying only it is "the most widely used American Government book."

LaClair took the book to the Center for Inquiry (CFI), a non-partisan think tank in New York that promotes scientific investigation and critical thinking in public life. In April, the center put out a blistering 65-page report on the book's errors and biases, and has since launched a campaign to get Houghton Mifflin

Harcourt to correct the errors.

"We thought because this textbook is being used so widely in classrooms across America, that it was very important to address these misperceptions so that our next generation of leaders aren't confused about these issues," says Derek Araujo, the group's executive director.

Friends of the Earth launched a campaign to get the book's claims about global warming revised, and two of the world's most prominent climate scientists, James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and Michael MacCracken, chief scientist for climate change programs at the Climate Institute, sent letters to the publisher urging it to correct these misleading statements.

In April, Blake assured the Associated Press that the publisher "will be working with the authors to evaluate in detail the criticisms," and that the problems have been resolved in the 2008 edition.

But some of the same errors remain, including the erroneous Supreme Court vote on the *Lawrence v. Texas* and most of the erroneous claims about prayer in schools.

Neither DiIulio nor Wilson responded to requests for comment. But on April 27, Wilson wrote an op-ed for the *Los Angeles Times* in which he called LaClair and CIF's complaints "ridiculous."

Blake maintains that the authors were simply trying to convey the "politics" of the issue rather than disputing the science. He says a team of editors, copy editors and outside experts review their books. "We're proud of the process that we have," he says. "We believe it is a very even-handed book."

Meanwhile, students like LaClair are using the book to prepare for exams, and are left to choose between hard facts and the answers that their official curriculum deems correct. LaClair's class reached the global warming section in May, and the New School-bound senior wasn't sure what he would do on the exam—give the answers his teacher wants based on the text, or an answer based on current science.

"It's a tough call," says LaClair, "because I would be risking my grade." ■

KATE SHEPPARD is the political reporter for the online environmental magazine, *Grist.org*.

The Right's New Attack on Voters

LAST APRIL, AS a national debate raged over whether Indiana's voter ID law protects election integrity or disenfranchises low-income voters, a more sinister—and potentially damaging—voter-vetting proposal sat quietly in nine state legislatures, attracting little attention.

Laws that would require proof-of-citizenship—in the form of a birth certificate, passport or naturalization papers—in order to register to vote have been introduced in eight states—California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, South Carolina, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

That number was pared down from nine in late May, when, under popular pressure, the Missouri legislature ended their sessions without calling their proof-of-citizenship referendum to a vote. The Missouri bill—HJR 48—was the only such law that had the potential to go into effect prior to this November's elections.

The Time of Change Has Come

Humanity is setting a new course for itself. A renewed cry for justice and freedom issues forth from all quarters, growing daily in urgency.

In response to this cry of the heart, a group of highly advanced teachers, led by Maitreya, the World Teacher, have come to guide us through our present crises. Life as we know it will be forever changed.

Are you ready?

Hear British author Benjamin Creme speak on the emergence of Maitreya:
NY, LA & SF in Jul-Aug. Info: 888-242-8272 or TheEmergence.org/itt

FOR EYES

Unite for Sight has its eyes on an ambitious goal: ridding the world of preventable blindness.

The National Eye Institute estimates that 80 percent of blindness worldwide is preventable.

Unite for Sight provides services like free eye screenings and cataract surgeries to improve global eye health.

Jennifer Staple founded the non-profit eight years ago in New Haven, Conn. It has since grown to include 90 chapters with 4,000 volunteers working in Africa, Asia and North America. In developing nations, the organization has partnered with ophthalmologists to provide more than 14,000 cataract surgeries.

Staple says she was inspired to form the organization while working as an ophthalmology researcher during the summer in between classes at Yale.

"Interacting with low-income patients, I learned about eye diseases that could have been prevented by early medical intervention," she says.

By partnering with universities and local healthcare professionals, Unite for Sight assists the medically underserved and uninsured.

"For \$50, someone can go from being completely blind to having their vision restored," Staple says. "There are patients who've never had clear vision. A whole world opens up to them."

The group also collects and distributes used eyeglasses to people in need.

Visit www.uniteforsight.org to learn more.

—Matt Schwartzman-Stubbs



Birdell Owen, a Missouri resident who was displaced by Hurricane Katrina and has no birth certificate, was among those who celebrated the victory.

"I should be able to participate in my democracy," she says, "even if Louisiana can't get me a copy of my birth certificate. I'm glad Missouri politicians had the sense to protect my right to vote."

Supporters of proof-of-citizenship bills say they aren't trying to dissuade people like Owen from voting. Their targets, they claim, are the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States.

"When we have close elections in this country, the people have to have confidence that it was lawfully decided by honest, legitimate voters, not non-citizens and illegal people trying to participate in the process," said Mark "Thor" Hearne, national election law counsel for President Bush's 2004 campaign and a prominent conservative voting restriction advocate, on NPR in 2006.

Hearne was an avid supporter of the recent Missouri proposal, but so far, he and other supporters have been hard-pressed for evidence of an immigrant electoral take-over.

In 2002, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft established the Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative—a nationwide effort to find and prosecute fraudulent voters. To date, the effort has nabbed only 15 non-citizens, according to research compiled by Lori Minnite, a Columbia University political science professor and author of *The Politics of Voter Fraud*.

In 2004, Arizona voters approved Proposition 200 of the Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, making it the only state where voters must prove citizenship in order to cast a vote.

"A lot of people said this isn't going to affect me," says Nina Perales, an attorney with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, referring to the Arizona law. "But it turned out to be a lot more restrictive than many voters thought it would be."

Perales, who is currently suing Arizona on behalf of disenfranchised plaintiffs, says the state has rejected more than 37,000 applications since Proposition 200 went into effect. She says the state also left uncounted more than 4,000 cast provisional ballots



If the GOP gets their way, passports might become the new ticket to vote.

because of polling place ID requirements.

"A lot of these people had ID, but it wasn't good enough under Prop 200," Perales says.

The largest segment of the population affected by the new law is women. A November 2006 report by the Opinion Research Center and compiled by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law found that only 66 percent of women surveyed had ready access to proof of citizenship bearing their legal names.

According to Maggie Duncan, national spokeswoman for the League of Women Voters, broadening documentation requirements could effectively "turn thousands of women away from the polls."

And women wouldn't be alone. People of color, senior citizens, people with disabilities and those with comparatively low incomes were all over-represented among those lacking citizenship documentation in the NYU study. Overall, as many as 7 percent of U.S. citizens surveyed—or roughly 13 million individuals of voting age—reported having no immediate access to the documents.

In Missouri, the League of Women Voters was at the forefront of a movement to defeat the new voting restrictions, and was joined by a broad coalition that included the American Association of Retired People, labor organizations, disability advocates and others.

"We are working in states throughout the country where we are making sure

voters are educated and keeping a close eye on legislation,” says Duncan. “If something were to pop up, our state leagues are on the ground in every state working to make sure voters are protected, and working closely with officials in those states.”

“Missouri was the biggest threat, because of the political climate, in terms of something happening this year,” says Michael Slater, deputy director of Project Vote, a D.C.-based organization that promotes voting in low-income and minority communities. “But anywhere there is a Republican-controlled legislature, it could feasibly pass in 2009—places like Florida, Missouri and other states.”

“Given the potential impact of new voters in the 2008 election and their historical impact in the past two elections,” says Slater, “it’s no surprise that we see partisans trying to curb the participation of new voters.”

—Jessica Pupovac

Hard Times for Student Borrowers

KELLY LYNCH, a former Columbia College Chicago film and video major, is paying educational loan lender Sallie Mae \$600 a month, about 1 percent of his total student loan debt of \$60,000. Though Lynch, 21, never received his degree from Columbia and barely survives with freelance film and video work, he considers himself lucky.

Lynch consolidated his loans through Sallie Mae a few months before the nation’s largest student loan lender suspended its student loan consolidation program in April. The policy shift left many other young borrowers with inflated interest rates.

“To leave college and enter the real world with such grave debt is a setup for failure,” says Lynch. “What good are well-educated kids who, right out of the cradle, have major financial obligations before most own a house, a car or know where the nearest grocery store is?”

Sallie Mae’s decision came in the midst of what many in the student loan industry call a crisis. From August 2007 to May 2008, at least 103 lenders stopped or suspended writing student loans, according to Finaid.org, a student-loan re-

source website. The companies that have stopped include Nelnet, the College Loan Corporation and CIT Group—among the nation’s largest lenders.

In May, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the private student loan market grew by as much as 25 percent a year for a decade. That momentum has evaporated. For the first time in 40 years, no bonds backed by student loans were purchased in the first quarter of 2008, according to *Forbes*.

“Lenders are just having difficulty raising the capital,” says Kevin Bruns, executive director of America’s Student Loan Providers, an industry trade group. “We’re going into the summer months, when about 75 percent of the student loans are processed. So that means about 75 percent of \$60 billion will be processed this summer, [but] there isn’t \$45 billion in capital in the system right now because lenders can’t raise it.”

And the government knows it.

The Department of Education is beginning to buy back student loans from companies that cannot sell them to other investors, and it will double the amount of money available for the federal government’s direct loan program. But for students who already have loans and are having trouble consolidating, the recent legislation provides no reprieve.

Brett Novak graduated from Full Sail University in Orlando, Fla., with about \$100,000 in Sallie Mae student loans. He no longer has the option to consolidate his loans. Beginning in June, he must start making his \$1,000 monthly loan payment.

Novak, who works full time at a production company in Hollywood, Calif., says the six months he had before his repayment started went by faster than expected.

“At least my interest rate [at 9 percent] isn’t as high as my girlfriend’s, which is, like, 14 percent,” says Novak.

Lynch and Novak are not alone. And organizations are springing up to raise awareness of the problems in the industry, which has taken a pounding since 2006, when scandals about kickbacks between universities and their preferred lenders surfaced.

On May 6, the nonprofit Mobilize.org released a report detailing the industry’s effect on millennials, generally defined as those between 16 and 30 years old.

Cristina Gagnier, one of the report’s authors, says most legislation ends up benefiting lenders, not the students affected by the problem.

She says that one area of particular interest to many millennials is the rapidly rising cost of higher education, which has soared in the past decade. The National Student Loan Debt Clock, a project of Student PIRGS (Public Interest Research Groups), calculates that as of May 27, U.S. students are \$535 trillion in debt—and counting.

—James H. Ewert Jr.



Gatherings at Chicago’s Jane Addams Hull House attempt to reinvent the soup kitchen.

Re-thinking Soup for the Soul

RE-THINKING SOUP, a project of Chicago’s Jane Addams Hull House Museum, serves up bowls of soup to bring together food activists, policy-makers and the hungry.

Beginning in May, every Tuesday organizers have served free lunch—healthy soup and organic bread—inside the historic Hull House Residents’ Dining Hall on the city’s near southwest side. (The hall is where author Upton Sinclair sat each night to write *The Jungle*.)

Hull House executive chef Sam Kass and fellow chef Yoni Levy cook in two large kettles, which serve approximately 250 bowls. So far, the event has averaged about 150 attendees per gathering.

“It’s not just about getting tons of calories,” says Kass, a chef of more than

10 years, “but what kind of calories. Is it healthy? Where does it come from? What is the produce being used?”

Since 2005, more than 35 supermarkets have abandoned poor communities on Chicago’s south and west sides, leaving an estimated half million people without access to affordable, nutritious food.

Hull House Museum Executive Director Lisa Lee says that Re-thinking Soup aims to bring together the community—from the hungry to the mayor’s office—for a discussion on food policy.

Each lunch features a speaker from groups like the Illinois Task Force on Local and Organic Food and Farms, the Organic School Project, or a chef committed to utilizing sustainable food systems.

Upcoming topics include immigration, biofuels, GMOs and alternatives to fast food. And a monthly “Soup Soapbox” gives attendees the mic—allowing young adults and seasoned activists the opportunity to share stories, poetry and calls to action.

“Even if the soup isn’t entirely organic,” says Lee, “we want the conversation to be.”

In 1889, when the Hull House opened in Chicago’s 19th ward—currently the site of the University of Illinois at Chicago campus—more than 20 different immigrant populations called the community home. Many of them were destitute.

Addams and her contemporaries ignited a social movement that used the domestic sphere to build community. Hull House initially provided only basics needs, then expanded into a 13-branch settlement that included a school, art gallery, clubs, theater, nursery, gym and several coffee houses.

The Residents’ Dining Hall served low cost meals, drawing in activists alongside those in dire need. It quickly grew into an organizing center that helped lead national movements against child labor, as well as for juvenile justice, women’s suffrage and fair immigration policies. In addition to Sinclair, the Hall hosted people such as journalist Ida B. Wells, socialist leader Eugene Debs, civil rights activist W.E.B. DuBois and writer Gertrude Stein.

“A lot of brilliant minds of that generation took their knowledge and channeled it

through the kitchen,” says Lee, speaking of the first generation of American women to attend college. “They talked about how they could transform food culture ... and how food might be a way of bringing communities that surrounded this neighborhood together in creating new kinds of publics.”

Kass and Lee say it’s again time to shift the soup kitchen from a direct-service site to one that stirs up a vision for the future.

“For the breadth of human history, the poor have always been the face of starvation,” says Kass, who says his profession must take the lead in tackling public health issues. “In contemporary America, not only is there an unconscionable amount of people [who] remain hungry, there’s even a larger population, mostly poor, who are faced with obesity, diabetes and various other problems from overabundance.”

Hull House provides free soup, but that is only the beginning. Lee says, “What we’re asking people to do is build a new community and become stakeholders in how we can achieve dramatic change.”

—Natasha Eziquiel-Shriro

appall-o-meter

1.6 The Thrill of Victory

After a big night at the disco, two Swiss chums decided to have a lark and see who could spit the farthest from their hotel balcony, reports Reuters.

One of them got the bright idea to take a running start from inside the room. Well, you know what happened next. It is not recorded who was the victor that night, but he who made the greater effort no longer walks among the living.

3.2 Time to Make the Outrage

In what universe does the headline, “Mainstreaming Terrorism to Sell Donuts,” make any sense at all? Why, in the increasingly desperate corner of the blogosphere populated by Michelle Malkin and Charles Johnson.

Readers alerted Johnson, proprietor of the website Little Green Footballs, that Dunkin’ Donuts was running TV ads featuring celebrity chef Rachael Ray wearing a *keffiyeh*—the Arab cloth made iconic by Yasser Arafat—around her neck as a scarf.

More “jihadi chic,” bitched conservative columnist Malkin. “Hate couture.”

“Dunkin’ Donuts, the venerable old

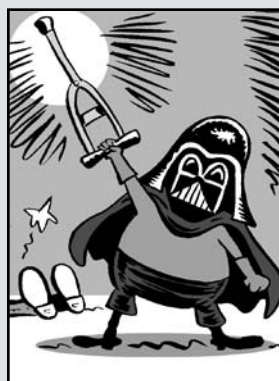
fried dough seller, is the latest American firm to casually promote the symbol of Palestinian terrorism and the intifada,” crowed Johnson.

Dunkin’ Donuts issued a statement, claiming, rather unconvincingly, that Ray was wearing not a *keffiyeh* but a paisley scarf. The company pulled the spots.

Amid all the alarm, Gawker, that paragon of journalistic responsibility, helpfully pointed readers to a website curated by Meghan McCain, daughter of Sen. John, featuring numerous pictures of herself wearing—what else?—but that talisman of Islamofascism, the *keffiyeh*. Hers was of a lovely purple hue.

3.5 Meanwhile, Hate Lurks

Arwel Wynne Hughes was arrested in Holyhead, Wales, after he attacked members of the Church of Jediism with a metal crutch. According to the Associated Press, the assailant went on his rampage while dressed as Darth Vader, wearing a garbage



bag for a cape. He bel-lowed, “Darth Vader! Jedi!” before clouting Barney Jones (aka Master Jonba Hehol), the founder of the church, on the head and whacking Michael Jones (Master Mormi Hehol) on the thigh with the crutch.

Fortunately, the victims were able to capture the attack on video (they had set up a camera to film themselves in a light saber battle). Hughes

maintains that he had drunk a great deal of wine and does not recall the incident. He was given a suspended sentence and had to pay a small fine.

The AP notes that some 390,000 Britons claim to be devotees of Jedi, a religion that figures in the *Star Wars* movies.

“We all love the films and what they stand for. Obviously some people are going to laugh about it,” Jones told a Welsh newspaper. “But a lot of people do take it seriously.”

—Dave Mulcahey

ICE Cold to Kids

AT 10 A.M. on May 12, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents descended on a meat processing plant in Postville, Iowa, about 200 miles northwest of Des Moines. ICE agents arrested 389 workers who it determined were undocumented—304 of whom were indicted on various charges, mostly related to their immigrant status. The list of arrested did not include the owners or managers at the meat processing plant.

After Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform in 2006, ICE adopted what is referred to as an “enforcement-only” approach to immigration. The incident in Postville is one example.

ICE arrests have increased 45-fold since 2001, according to the National Council of La Raza, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit. In 2007, nearly 5,000 workplace immigration arrests occurred nationwide.

The children of those arrested—many of whom are U.S. citizens—suffer consequences. The raid in Iowa “created panic in the school,” said Janet Murguía, president of the National Council of La Raza, during a May 20 hearing before the House subcommittee on workforce protections. She said it forced St. Bridget’s Catholic Church in Postville to mobilize and feed 450 migrants the first night of the raid, and to shelter 150 children who spent the night on mats and in pews.

The number of children with undocumented parents is unknown, but a March 2005 report by the Pew Hispanic Center found that 4.9 million children are in families with at least one undocumented parent. Of those, 3.1 million—or 63 percent—are U.S. citizens.

Last November, ICE adopted humanitarian guidelines after Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and others pushed for their implementation. The discretionary guidelines require agents to investigate whether humanitarian concerns exist among those arrested—including “those with serious medical conditions ... pregnant women, nursing mothers, parents who are the sole caretakers of minor children or disabled or seriously ill relatives, and parents who are needed to sup-

snapshot



PORT SULPHUR, LA.— Nakeva Narcisse and daughter Asanta Mackey, 5, sit outside their FEMA trailer on May 31. Asanta has a persistent cough. Doctors fear tens of thousands of children were exposed to dangerous levels of the cancer-causing agent formaldehyde in the post-Katrina FEMA trailers. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)

port their spouses in caring for sick or special needs children or relatives.”

Agents are also asked to coordinate with other institutions, such as foster care systems and the Department of Health and Human Services.

“What we’d like to see is those regulations enforced on a consistent basis—strictly enforced and not applied in a discretionary way,” Murguía testified.

Kathryn Gibney is principal of an overwhelmingly (96 percent) Latino elementary school in San Pedro, Calif., a community that experienced a raid in March 2007. She told lawmakers that members of her community have witnessed white ICE vans stationed near school grounds in Oakland and Berkeley to ensnare parents.

Gibney said the effect on her school has been “ongoing relentless terror.”

“The impact of these raids has been devastating,” she said. “Absentee rates have soared. Test scores have dropped. Students who do make it to school remain distracted, as they worry about whether their families will be at home when they return.”

The San Pedro raid last year occurred in the predawn hours before a state-mandated exam. About 40 students were absent that day—seven times greater than the school’s normal absence rate.

According to Gibney, in San Rafael, Calif., on May 8, ICE agents stopped a second-grade girl who was on her way to school with her father. The agents couldn’t communicate with the father in his native language, so the girl served as translator. The agents eventually arrested her father.

ICE insists it acts humanely when rounding up illegal aliens. Acting Deputy Assistant Director of ICE James Sperro told Congress that agents involved in the Postville incident questioned detainees “no less than three times about humanitarian issues, such as child custody concerns.” He said agents eventually released 62 of those arrested, but added that those released are still likely to be charged.

As Gibney told the committee: “There must be a way to execute a federal mandate in a more humane manner.”

—Kay Steiger

BY SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

Damned If Feminine, Damned If Feminist



WHAT ROLE HAS sexism played in the race for the Democratic nomination? Hillary Clinton answered that seething question herself in late May, telling the *Washington Post* that the press turned a blind eye to the “incredible vitriol that has been engendered ... by people who are nothing but misogynists.” Her most avid supporters are clearly aggrieved

by what they see as anti-woman sentiment in the media.

Then there’s the pointless debate about what’s more permissible, racism or sexism? How do we imagine, say, Michelle Obama might answer that? She stands at the intersection of both streams of prejudice.

These false oppositions—about whether the treatment of Clinton has been sexist, or if sexism is more acceptable than racism—miss the point.

So much is in flux in this campaign: who’s voting for whom (e.g., white women in Indiana for Clinton—and Obama), the heightened prominence of women and blacks as candidates *and* voting blocs, and evolving standards for assessing candidates in a country with a press still trapped in superficial “gotcha!” journalism.

The news media—part of a larger industry that gives us no-nonsense women surgeons, police lieutenants and law partners in TV dramas on the one hand, and “The Bachelor” on the other—oscillates wildly between its commitment to equality and its continued, though unconscious institutional sexism and racism.

Women are held up simultaneously to feminist and feminine standards, and must fulfill both, but with a bias (still) toward the feminine. The ideal seems to be the Steel Magnolia.

Sen. Clinton has been treated like most male candidates, questioned about her policies, attacked for gaffes and inflammatory remarks. Yet the press has also persisted—despite the countless times feminists have denounced this routine—in emphasizing her physical appearance to an extent rarely done with male candidates.

The feminine-feminist schizophrenic playbook has also been closely followed for two women who couldn’t be more different: Cindy McCain and Michelle Obama.

In February, both commanded the national spotlight. On Feb. 21, as reported in the *New York Daily News*, a “slender”

Cindy McCain, “the striking blond” and “perky stay-at-home mom” “stood by her man” to defend her husband against charges printed in the *New York Times* that he had had an improper relationship with “an attractive female lobbyist.” Or, as the *Washington Post* stated, she stood by “her husband’s side, all jewel-toned clothing and icy blue eyes.”

Yet in an April *USA Today* feature, we learned that this “elegant blonde in jewel-toned suits and a quadruple strand of pearls ... travels to poor countries on medical missions” and “chairs a huge beer distribution company.” Say what?

The same woman that CNN’s Carol Costello and various bloggers have ridiculed as a “Stepford wife,” has also been, since 2000, chairman of Hensley & Co., her father’s \$300 million Anheuser-Busch distribution company, and serves

on the boards of three charitable organizations dedicated to children. Stay-at-home mom?

USA Today also reported that when her husband’s campaign nearly crashed, “She had a pretty strong hand

in righting the campaign.” So, Cindy McCain has been dismissed as a blonde bimbo clotheshorse, and as the money and power behind her husband’s success.

That same week, Michelle Obama appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* in a simple, sleeveless, pale blue satin sheath, a string of pearls, and a simple bouffant hair-do, immediately prompting analogies to Jacqueline Kennedy. The headline read “He Calls Her His ‘Rock.’” Inside we learned she’s “steely.” In her account of her interview with Michelle, CNN’s Soledad O’Brien emphasized her “perfect make-up” and “fabulous patent-leather boots.”

Yet Mrs. Obama faces continuing denunciations for saying, “For the first time in my adult life, I am really proud of my country.” Right-wing pundits consistently cast her as negative, unpatriotic and as hating America. So, Mrs. Obama is a stylish Benedict Arnold.

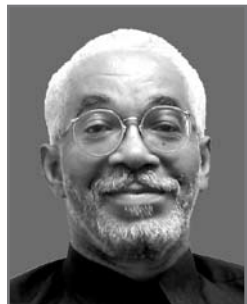
The question isn’t whether the media have been sexist. Of course they have. The issue for women—be they candidates or spouses—is how our culture’s ongoing and conflicted attitudes toward femininity (too much is too retro and weak) versus feminism (too assertive and strident) leaves most public women no place to stand.

When race is thrown into the mix, however veiled, as it will be with Mrs. Obama, we can only imagine what contortions she’ll be put through. ■

Women are held up simultaneously to feminist and feminine standards, and must fulfill both, but with a bias (still) toward the feminine.

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Israel's Openly Secret Nukes



FOES OF NUCLEAR proliferation got two disturbing bits of news last month.

One was the May 26 report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which said Iran has not been candid about its uranium enrichment program and that it has serious concerns about alleged research into nuclear weapons.

The other news was less official but perhaps more sobering: Former President Jimmy Carter said Israel has at least 150 atomic weapons in its arsenal.

Carter responded to a question about the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran during a news conference at a May 25 literary festival in Wales, U.K.

"The U.S. has more than 12,000 nuclear weapons; the Soviet Union (sic) has about the same; Great Britain and France have several hundred, and Israel has 150 or more,"

Carter said, according to the BBC.

This off-handed reference to Israel's nuclear capabilities was unusual for U.S. officials, who are usually mute on the issue. According to a May 26 story from BBC News, however, "most experts estimate that Israel has between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads, largely based on information leaked to the *Sunday Times* newspaper in the 1980s by Mordechai Vanunu, a former worker at the country's Dimona nuclear reactor."

U.S. officials usually follow Israel's policy of "nuclear ambiguity," which neither confirms nor denies Israel's nuclear capacity. This is official deception and it has allowed Israel to ignore the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, as well as conventions on biological and chemical weapons.

So, while IAEA inspectors poke around incessantly in Iran, they are not even authorized to inspect Israel's arsenal.

By adopting the Israeli policy of nuclear ambiguity, the United States can violate its own restrictions on aiding a nation with unauthorized weapons of mass destruction and continue to lavish billions in aid and military assistance to its Middle East ally. But how does this nuclear duplicity affect the prospects of peace in the Middle East?

Carter's casual mention of Israel's nukes seems to be just another of his attempts to bring more sanity to Middle East negotiations. In the current dustup over the IAEA Iran report, for example, wouldn't it be reasonable to argue that

A former president (who in 1978 helped forge peace between Israel and Egypt) is being charged as an anti-Semite—and a traitor, to boot.

Iran may seek nukes because one of its major adversaries is bristling with nuclear weapons and, as a recent Israeli bombing raid into Syria revealed, is increasingly trigger-happy?

This is a reasonable argument, but our relationship with Israel mutes it. We can't publicly admit Israel possesses nukes, lest we be accused of hostility toward the Jewish state, which increasingly is equated to anti-Semitism. Thus, we have this astonishing spectacle of a former president (who in 1978 helped forge peace between Israel and Egypt) being charged as an anti-Semite—and a traitor, to boot.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, another figure who played a part in the historic 1978 Camp David agreement as Carter's National Security Adviser, has also been attacked for his negative statements about some Israeli policies. Brzezinski is a foreign

policy realist who also has expressed his strong support for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama.

Some supporters of Israel have condemned Brzezinski for his criticism of the govern-

ment's unwillingness to compromise and its treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Because of these positions, he said he has been vilified by some Jewish supporters of Israel who display a "McCarthyite tendency."

On May 27, the London *Telegraph* quoted Brzezinski saying, "They operate not by arguing, but by slandering, vilifying, demonizing. They very promptly wheel out anti-Semitism. There is an element of paranoia in this inclination to view any serious attempt at a compromised peace as somehow directed against Israel."

Brzezinski also has expressed support for professors John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, whose 2007 book, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, decried the influence of Israeli lobbyist groups and angered many American Jews. For their critical analysis of how the lobby has warped U.S. foreign policy, Mearsheimer and Walt, both respected academics (at the University of Chicago and Harvard, respectively) have also been branded as anti-Semites.

The inability to discuss candidly the pros and cons of our nation's Middle East policy—including the reality of Israel's nuclear weapons—has limited our diplomatic options by tying us to an obscurantist strategy.

Averting our gaze from Israel's nuclear cache may yield some short-range benefits, but ignoring reality is seldom a good policy. ■

DROPPIN' A DIME

BY LAURA S. WASHINGTON

The Great Election Robbery of 2008?



COME NOV. 4, the elephant in the polling booth is the possibility that the 2008 presidential election will be stolen—again.

Loser Take All is a new collection of essays edited by Mark Crispin Miller. Subtitled “Election Fraud and the Subversion of Democracy, 2000-2008,” the book reviews a contemporary slew of electoral mischief, hubris and thievery.

Miller has been around this block before. A professor of media, culture and communication at New York University, Miller authored the 2007 book, *Fooled Again: The Real Case for Electoral Reform*. He is a leading voice on media activism and electoral reform.

Miller wastes no time diving into the gloom and doom. By page three of his wide-ranging, sarcasm-laden introduction, he suggests that the United States is headed toward a fascist state. While “the guardians of the establishment” on both sides of the aisle crow that American Democracy is a shining beacon for the world, Miller writes, our so-called free and fair elections are seriously corrupted. He argues the American media has done its darndest to rewrite history and that the Bush/Cheney “re-election” of 2004 was a “masterpiece of fraud.”

And that’s just one of the myriad examples laid out in this detailed and compelling series of articles.

Miller marshals a brigade of contributors, including investigative reporters, editors, bloggers, university professors, activists, statisticians and tech nerds. They team up to present an array of warning signs that America should brace for the Great Election Robbery of 2008.

In the essay, “Diebold and Max Cleland’s Loss in Georgia,” Robert F. Kennedy Jr.—a university professor, Air America talk show host and former assistant district attorney in New York City—reveals the handiwork of the infamous Diebold e-voting machine and its role in the 2002 loss of Democratic U.S. Sen. Max Cleland to Republican challenger Saxby Chambliss.

Just months before the November 2002 election, the voting machine manufacturer managed to wrangle an exclusive \$54 million contract to oversee and run the election machinery for all of Georgia. The Republican-friendly

company “was authorized to put together ballots, program machines and train poll workers across the state—all without any official supervision,” Kennedy writes.

Diebold went on to illegally install software patches on 5,000 Diebold voting machines in two heavily Democratic Georgia counties. The patches, whistleblower Chris Hood explains, can be programmed to change the actual votes the machines record. “There could be a hidden program on a memory card that adjusts everything to the preferred election results,” Hood told Kennedy.

Six days before the election, Cleland was up in the polls by five percentage points. Election Day rolled around and—voila!—the popular Senate incumbent, war veteran and double amputee lost to opponent Chambliss by seven points.

Hood, a former consultant to Diebold and the son of African Americans who worked for voting rights in the South, argues that companies like Diebold have compromised

the democratic process. “What I saw,” he says, “was basically a corporate takeover of our voting system.”

Despite citing a plethora of examples like this, Miller’s book can get bogged down in technical language. There’s a promising ring to the title of David L. Griscom’s piece, “How to Stuff the Electronic Ballot Box: ‘Hacking and Stacking’ in Pima County, Arizona.” But Griscom, a retired research physicist, quickly descends into a messy agglomeration of blurry statistics, indecipherable bar graphs and arcane acronyms.

Take this choice excerpt on page 124:

In the first row of Table 3, we see that [Sen. John] Kerry had a 5.0 percent smaller (negative) at-the-precinct vote share than his LD-27-wide average. We also see that Bush has a 4.5 percent *larger* at-the-precinct share than his LD-27-wide average. To get the “gross shift” of votes from Kerry to Bush, we subtract the number in the Kerry column on the same row as the Bush column.

Fa ged aboudit.

Still, once you skim through the tech stuff, there’s still plenty of critical evidence left that shows we have been lulled into a dangerous complacency about the integrity of our election system.

Loser Take All is a wakeup call at 3 a.m. from a screaming relative. Take heed. ■

While the guardians of the establishment crow that American Democracy is a shining beacon for the world, our elections are corrupted.

Dismantling the Myth of McCain

How the Republican senator's maverick image is a sham

BY DAVID MOBERG

AS THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE shifts into summer gear, Democrats have a McCain problem. And John McCain has a Bush problem—or at least Democrats hope he will.

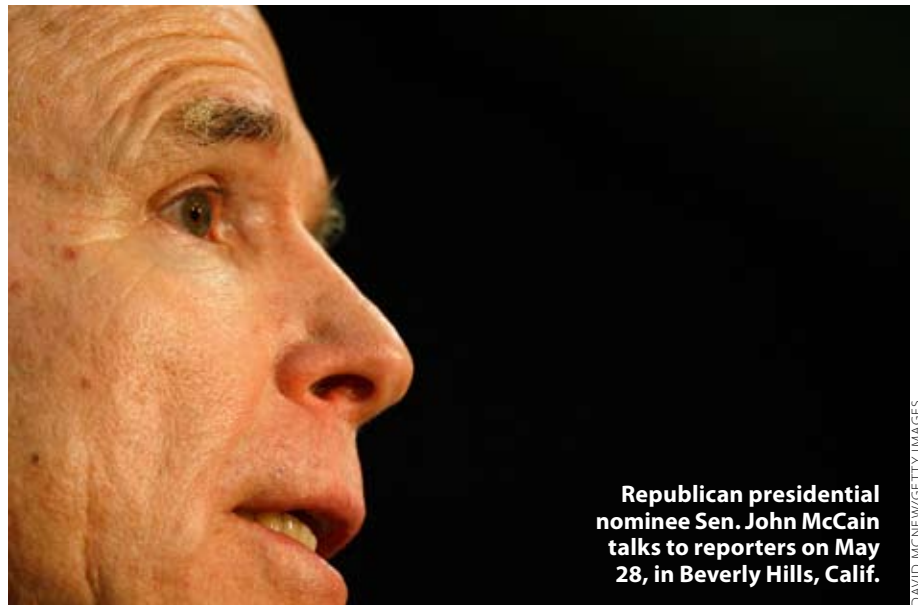
Judging from opinion polls about the president and the direction the country is going, if George W. Bush were on the ballot this fall, Democrats would win the presidency. Even an unspecified Democrat running against a generic Republican would win handily.

But with Sen. Barack Obama facing Sen. McCain, early summer polls show the race gets much tighter, with the lead over McCain for the real Democratic candidate running about 10 points less than for the generic.

McCain's strength stems from his media-fostered image as a straight-talking maverick reformer and former prisoner of war. But the downside for McCain is that many Republicans distrust him, with roughly a quarter of Republicans withholding votes from him even in late primaries.

With his eyes on the presidential race, McCain has spent the past few years cultivating the Right, most famously reconciling with the Rev. Jerry Falwell in 2006, despite having denounced him and televangelist Pat Robertson in 2000 as "agents of intolerance."

Even more compelling visually is the 2004 picture of "The Hug"—McCain throwing his arms around President Bush and leaning against the president's chest with a sheepish smile on his face, as Bush waves to a crowd. In February, Bush gave



Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain talks to reporters on May 28, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

DAVID MCNEU/GETTY IMAGES

McCain his political embrace, declaring him a "true conservative."

So, who is "the real McCain"? (Incidentally, the title of a new book by journalist Cliff Schechter.) The record shows McCain to be a strongly pro-business, anti-government, hawkish neoconservative who has increasingly supported many right-wing evangelical causes (such as teaching intelligent design as an alternative to evolution).

Yet at times he has alienated parts of the Republican Right, mainly on issues in which McCain's position safely reflected strong majorities of public opinion, as journalists David Brock and Paul Waldman argue in *Free Ride: John McCain and the Media*.

McCain won his reformer credentials by co-sponsoring legislation with pro-

gressive Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) that, in 2002, banned soft money contributions to political parties. The long fight for the bill won McCain adulation in the press. But ultimately, it didn't keep soft money out of politics, and some conservatives believed it was more likely to hurt Democrats than Republicans.

By 2006, as Schechter reports, McCain was backing away from legislation for federal election public financing that he had once supported.

By then, McCain had won the image he needed as a clean-politics reformer to expunge the effects of his having been named in 1991 as one of the "Keating Five"—senators who had received financial favors from, and then tried to help, fraudulent savings and loan operator Charles Keating.

Yet his image as a clean politician above the political swamp of Washington politics is most belied by his long and deep connections with corporate lobbyists.

According to the anti-McCain website Progressive Media USA, McCain had at least 118 lobbyists running his campaign, including campaign manager Rick Davis—who lobbied for major telecommunications companies (for whom McCain has often intervened legislatively)—and senior adviser Charles Black—who was registered as a lobbyist for right-wing guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi of Angola and such dictators as Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire.

In May, the campaign dismissed several lobbyists and promulgated new rules for campaign workers. But McCain's reliance on corporate special interest lobbyists is so pervasive that his personal image will continue to suffer.

Brock and Waldman argue, however, that the myth of McCain has two other founding pillars: his time as a prisoner of war in Vietnam and his cultivation of the press. McCain is sure to continue using his time in prison for political advantage. But when he had the chance to use his moral weight as a victim of torture to stand up to Bush's policies, he did so only rhetorically, eventually agreeing to legislation that still permitted techniques such as waterboarding.

The mass media can be fickle, but, initially, McCain has gotten a pass from many

high-profile reporters. As Brock and Waldman note, McCain has carefully cultivated relationships with the press, providing unusually open access and surprising candor—or at least the appearance of candor.

However, as recounted by Schechter, as well as Brock and Waldman, some reporters have noted the occasional flare-ups of McCain's remarkably mean temper in dealing with colleagues and even his wife. And McCain's shining armor, which has blinded many reporters, is increasingly tarnished by his associations with right-wing evangelical supporters, like the Rev. Rod Paisley and the Rev. John Hagee, who preached that Hitler's genocide of the Jews was simply part of God's plan.

There's also a long history of McCain's shifts to the right and his flip-flops. He moved from rejecting the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* to adopting an extreme opposition to abortion rights, and from opposing Bush's initial tax cuts for the rich to making permanent extension of those cuts the centerpiece of his economic policy. Once lauded for teaming with Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) to promote comprehensive immigration reform (favored by Bush and many business interests), McCain now promotes border security to cater to the anti-immigrant Right.

McCain's rhetoric and reality

As the myth of McCain comes into question, so might voters' evaluations of the man and his character: Voters' opin-

ions of McCain became less favorable over the late spring, according to recent Pew Research Center polling. But so far, those who view him unfavorably do so primarily because of his stance on issues, not for personal factors. (By contrast, Pew reports, a larger share of negative reaction to Obama is related to "the kind of person he is," not his position on issues.)

At this point, Pew reports, only 40 percent of independent voters think McCain will continue Bush's policies.

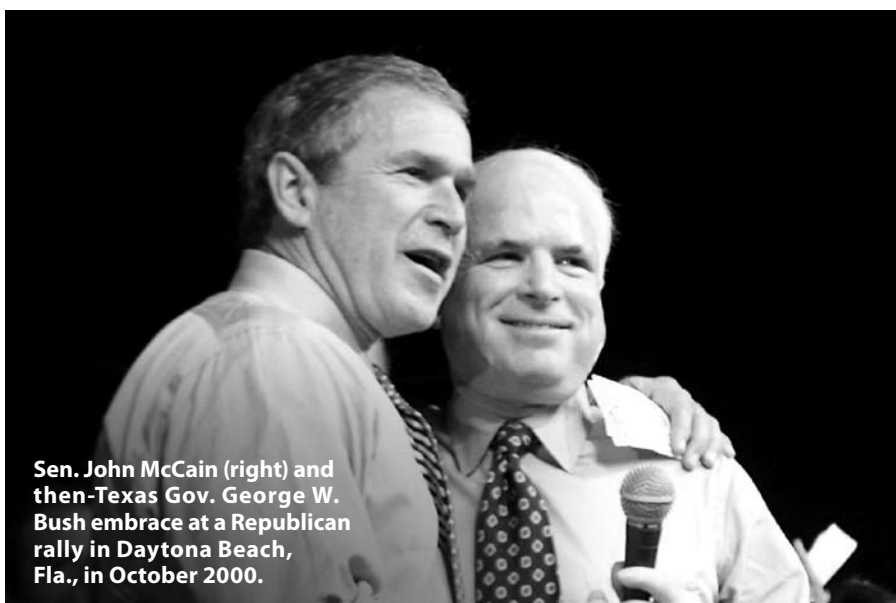
But Democracy Corps, a Democratic polling group, finds that 56 percent of voters interviewed agreed that Obama represents change and that McCain would continue Bush's policies, and said that fact would influence them to favor Obama. (It was the most influential of several definitions of the contest the group tested.)

In other words, there's potential to make a powerful case that McCain represents a third Bush term. After all, according to *Congressional Quarterly*, McCain voted with Bush 100 percent of the time so far this year, 95 percent of the time in 2007, and around 90 percent since Bush took office.

First, there's McCain's pledge—from which he is trying to retreat—to continue Bush's war in Iraq, with occupying forces for 100 years if necessary.

Second, there's a sharp foreign policy choice between Obama's aggressive diplomacy and McCain's military aggression ("Bomb, bomb, bomb—bomb, bomb Iran"). Even conservative Pat Buchanan writes that McCain "will make [Vice President Dick] Cheney look like Gandhi." And Slate's Fred Kaplan concludes that McCain's approach to North Korea is worse than Bush's.

Third, there's McCain's plan to continue Bush's tax cuts for the rich, which could otherwise be used to fund needed policies to help working- and middle-class families. McCain's chief economic adviser is former far-right Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), who recently lobbied on mortgage legislation for the hard-hit subprime speculator, Swiss-based bank UBS. Gramm signals that McCain will continue Bush's policies of non-regulation of business and the financial sector. And McCain has a consistent record of opposing minimum-wage increases and favoring measures that weaken unions.



Sen. John McCain (right) and then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush embrace at a Republican rally in Daytona Beach, Fla., in October 2000.

Fourth, McCain's healthcare proposal is much like Bush's (just as McCain and Bush both opposed expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program and promoted Health Savings Accounts that mainly benefit the rich and healthy). Proposed tax code changes could lead many businesses to stop providing health insurance, forcing individuals to shop for insurance with a tax credit covering only half the cost of the average policy. Insurers would not have to cover people with pre-existing health problems (and could escape all state laws that set quality standards). Under McCain's plan, most people will find it harder and more expensive to get insurance.

Fifth, like Bush, who met a firestorm of public opposition, McCain wants to privatize Social Security by creating personal, private accounts. With economic insecurity rising, McCain's revival of Bush's folly is likely to backfire politically, especially with older voters who might otherwise hesitate to vote for Obama.

Even on global warming—one of the few issues McCain claims independence and moderation compared to Bush—he refused to support his buddy Sen. Joe Lieberman's (I-Conn.) climate change bill because its subsidies for nuclear power weren't big enough (though McCain opposes subsidies for alternatives, such as wind).

Overall, McCain would try to move the country in the same direction most voters now think is wrong. But will they understand that? The Obama campaign, as well as the Democratic National Committee, regularly tries to identify McCain's election as a third term for Bush. But there's a long way to go in dismantling the myth of McCain "The Maverick" and in spelling out how much like Bush—and how unlike what most people say they want—McCain's proposals are.

Little help from his friends

Parallel to the official campaigns, independent efforts are underway to define McCain as more Bush—or worse.

In March, without an endorsed candidate, the AFL-CIO started a McCain Revealed campaign. By June, the union had distributed more than 1 million leaflets related to McCain's record to its members, and targeted key states and swing voters.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and other unions have mounted campaigns for healthcare reform that criticize McCain's proposals. USAction, a national organization of statewide citizen groups, is focused on opposing the war in Iraq and advocating for national health insurance.

On the Web or in limited television

"Long before the flap over whether the Obama campaign supported outside groups getting money, money wasn't flowing," says USAction Executive Director Jeff Blum. "The donor community has been frozen by the intensity, length and fascination of the primary."

But he adds, "when the right-wing attack machine moves on to Barack, and

When McCain could have used his moral weight as a torture victim to stand up to Bush's policies, he did so only rhetorically, eventually agreeing to legislation that still permitted waterboarding.

buys, MoveOn.org, Brave New Films and other groups have produced videos linking Bush and McCain. One MoveOn ad shows the two politicians acting and talking similarly to the accompaniment of music from the 1960s "The Patty Duke Show" ("You can lose your mind, when cousins are two of a kind").

But the big independent voter mobilization and advertising efforts of the past two elections—identified as 527 or 501(c)(4) groups, depending on their tax status—have not materialized.

Obama finance chair Penny Pritzker has told major Democratic donors not to fund these groups, and campaign spokesman Bill Burton confirmed to Politico.com that the campaign's strategy is to control funds, message and advertising, much in keeping with Obama's promise of a new kind of politics.

Although McCain has weakly decried the influence of 527 and other groups, he has said there's little he can do about them. And major backers of the 2004 Swift Boat campaign have already vowed to raise \$250 million to "attack Obama viciously."

But even before Pritzker's intervention, many progressive groups reported having a hard time raising money for their independent critiques of McCain, issue advocacy, advertising and coordination of efforts—despite early big contributions from investor George Soros and SEIU, to the Fund for America, which had hoped to raise \$100 million to distribute to groups such as Campaign to Defend America, Progressive Media USA and America Votes.

that time is coming soon, I hope our side is in a position to respond independently, just as they attack independently."

Independent groups supporting Democrats or progressive issues understand why the Obama campaign, with its fundraising success, wants to control the money and message. But they hope Obama's strategists will eventually, if privately, recognize the role for independents.

"I can't fathom that they won't," says longtime political strategist Don Rose. "They can play an important role. You want to control it as much as you can, but there are spots you want out that don't say, 'I approve of this message.'"

"You want to have many voices saying, more or less, the same thing about McCain," argues USAction Program Director Alan Charney. "The Obama campaign is putting out more and more how close McCain is to Bush. It helps when other groups say the same, creating an echo chamber."

But linking McCain to Bush's failed and unpopular policies will not work without a "populist, aspirational message," Blum says. "People want to know what you're for and not just what you're against. Bush personifies what a lot of people don't like. You can establish McCain is a third Bush term and that may open the door, but to close the deal, you have to talk about what you're for."

For Obama, that means making his message of hope more concrete and meaningful for working-class and middle-income voters. And for that, he may need a little help from his friends. ■



EXPAND THE VOTE

The Obama campaign's voter registration drive could radically alter the electoral map this fall

BY ADAM DOSTER

NINETEEN NINETY-TWO WAS A crucial election year in Illinois. Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton was hoping to carry a swing state that President George H.W. Bush had won by a scant 2 percentage points four years earlier, and Illinois' Cook County Recorder of Deeds Carol Moseley Braun was attempting to become the nation's first African-American female senator. Close observers believed that a swell in black turnout could make the difference in both contests, but activists feared that the leadership of Chicago's Democratic Party—which historically hadn't pushed registration in majority-black wards—would squander the opportunity.

In stepped a young organizer named Barack Obama. Fresh out of Harvard Law School, Obama moved to Chicago to head up the local branch of Project Vote, a D.C.-based non-partisan

voter registration organization focused in low-income communities of color. Recruiting staff and volunteers from community groups and black churches, he helped train 700 deputy registrars and devised a comprehensive media campaign based around the slogan "It's a Power Thing." His volunteers hit the streets and registered more than 150,000 black voters in only six months. According to a 1993 report from *Chicago* magazine, the elections "turned on these totals."

Sixteen years later, in the midst of his own presidential campaign, Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) hasn't forgotten the crucial lesson he learned canvassing Chicago's South Side: Activating underrepresented communities can dramatically alter close elections.

Using his massive volunteer base, the one-time organizer is now adapting his Chicago experience for the national stage, leading similar targeted drives in all 50 states. Combined with his



ability to inspire new voters and the continued efforts of long-established voter registration organizations, a registration boom could reconfigure the electoral map come November.

Why slice pie? Let's grow it!

Lynne Schwartz, a veteran clinical psychologist based in Ann Arbor, Mich., was drawn to Obama well before he rose to national prominence. Schwartz focuses on juvenile justice reform, and Obama had led efforts in Chicago to combat legislation that would have put more juvenile offenders into the adult system. After reading his first book, watching him deliver his famous 2004 Democratic National Convention speech, and learning about his commitment to the Constitution and consensus-based problem solving, Schwartz knew she had found her candidate.

"I kept hearing him talking about healing the nation and repairing the world," she says, "and I resonated with that at such a visceral level."

When he announced his presidential candidacy, Schwartz jumped in, volun-

teering as the Washtenaw County organizer for the fledgling Michiganders for Obama. Although the Illinois senator wasn't on the ballot in her state and had made no effort to campaign there, her organization pounded the sidewalks of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti anyway, talking to voters about the confusing circumstances of their early primary and the value of voting "uncommitted."

Their ground game paid off. "Uncommitted" received 45 percent in Washtenaw, beating the 43 percent Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) received in the county.

Following the primary, Schwartz stayed busy, phone banking from her personal computer, hosting local fundraisers, traveling to Ohio to canvass, and even winning a seat as a delegate to the national convention. But her biggest thrill came when the national campaign tapped her to run the local branch of the Vote for Change voter registration drive, a signal that the folks in Chicago were taking her organizing seriously.

Vote for Change is the latest iteration of the Obama campaign's comprehensive

electoral ground game, one that will build off the methodical and underreported registration efforts staged by Obama supporters during the primary season. Just in the late contests alone, campaign volunteers enlisted 200,000 new Democrats in Pennsylvania, 165,000 in North Carolina and more than 150,000 in Indiana.

"Recent voter registration drives conducted by our campaign have registered significant numbers of voters across this country," says Obama spokeswoman Shannon Gilson. "We feel like this really scratches the surface of what's possible."

Launched in all 50 states on May 10, Vote for Change has been dispatching Obama staffers across the country to marshal volunteers through the campaign's massive online database and train them in the basics of voter registration. Working with local organizers and using similar "micro-targeting" techniques honed by the GOP in the 2004 presidential campaign, Obama supporters will pepper precincts for the next six months in search of eligible but inactive political participants likely to value Obama's message of change.

"It's reaching out to our base of supporters," says Gilson, "and empowering them to reach out into their communities to register their friends and neighbors."

Chosen as one of the Vote for Change staging sites, Ann Arbor received a full-time organizer from the Obama campaign in late April, which Schwartz says has helped immensely with volunteer coordination and outreach.

"What has been outstanding and different from any other campaign that I've participated in has been the synergy," says Schwartz. "It's not like some campaign is coming in and the people doing the work on the ground for months are thrown under the bus. ... They have a strong interest in our ideas and how we do things here."

Following a successful kick-off on May 17, momentum in Washtenaw has been growing. Volunteer organizers have flooded Schwartz's Wednesday planning meetings, each with their own list of potential targets and tactics. On the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, 42 Obama supporters traveled to Ypsilanti and registered close to 100 people, many of whom have never voted.

Schwartz, who maintains she isn't easily inspired, says she is continually stunned by both the professionalism of the national campaign and the enthusiasm local organizers bring to the work. "I go to work and I get home and there are

new ideas being run by me that [are] just amazing," she says. "There's so much creativity and so much energy."

Such enthusiasm will be needed to reach the campaign's ambitious registration targets, which Gilson hinted would be in the millions. It helps that Obama has already won the support of many members of the voting rights community, who find his commitment to increasing the franchise refreshing.

"For many years, candidates ... tended to compete for people who are already in the electorate, rather than expanding the electorate," says Project Vote Deputy Director Michael Slater. "They thought of a slice of the pie rather than trying to grow the pie. So it's interesting to see a candidate that is really talking about growing the size of the electorate."

It's not just Obama

While Obama's drive has drawn attention for its distinctiveness among presidential contenders, focusing only on the campaign's work neglects the crucial fieldwork that institutionalized voter registration organizations will be undertaking this cycle.

To be sure, controversy has embroiled a few high-profile operations. Last year, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) fined the now-disbanded America Com-

ing Together \$775,000 for raising contributions that violated federal limits. This cycle, the North Carolina attorney general ordered Women's Voices, Women Vote to cease robo-calling voters with misleading messages after the primary registration date had past.

But beyond those limited transgressions, a slew of successful organizations will ramp up their own efforts in the coming months.

Among them is Project Vote, Obama's employer in 1992. Working in partnership with ACORN, the nation's largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, Project Vote orchestrates comprehensive drives targeted in low-income urban communities. Organizers are trained to canvass outside of locations where residents generally congregate—grocery stores, bus stops and religious institutions.

According to Slater, Project Vote registered more than 1 million voters in each of the last two cycles. Sticking to its time-tested formula, Project Vote has set a goal of 1.2 million new registrants.

Rock the Vote, the nation's most recognizable youth registration outfit, has made encouraging advances in online registration, a tool that hasn't matured as quickly as online political fundraising or organizing. Partnering with consumer rights organization Working Assets, Rock the Vote devised a voter registration widget—a portable application that political organizations, bloggers or candidates can embed on their websites using a simple HTML code.

Since last July, the widget has been added to 8,500 sites, and more than 600,000 young people have downloaded registration forms.

"What we do know is that registration is the biggest barrier to young people voting," says Rock the Vote Communications Director Chrissy Faessen, "so the more young people we can get registered, the more we can send them out to the polls."

Combined with its robust fieldwork, Faessen estimates that Rock the Vote could enlist 2 million new voters in this cycle.

The Poblano model

If winning elections is your primary focus, as is the case for most Obama vol-



Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) attends a town hall meeting May 19 in Billings, Mont.

ANNE SHERWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

unteers, boosting registration levels is only as valuable as the votes it produces.

"About 64 million Americans are eligible to vote but are not registered to vote," says Slater. "That's about one-third of the entire voting-eligible population. So the opportunity to expand

Illinois-based political website Progress Illinois (Disclosure: I'm a reporter-blogger for the site but had no hand in the article) to examine how gradual increases in turnout among certain demographic groups might affect the outcome of an Obama-Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) presidential

simulation fails to address. But these numbers, coupled with Silver's track record, should strike fear into the McCain camp, whose ground game is already suffering from a resource gap with Democrats and a lack of enthusiasm among the GOP's evangelical base.

In the late contests alone, Obama campaign volunteers enlisted 200,000 new Democrats in Pennsylvania, 165,000 in North Carolina and more than 150,000 in Indiana.

the electorate is there."

Among underrepresented constituencies, the statistics are even starker. While the voting rate for young people between ages 18 and 24 shot up 11 percentage points from 2000 to 2004, the registration rate sits at a paltry 58 percent. It's not much better for voters of color: African Americans (69 percent), Latinos (58 percent), and Asians (52 percent) all trail non-Hispanic white voters (75 percent). (If people of color were to vote at the same percentage as whites, there would be more than 5.5 million votes.)

Considering Obama's success with much of these segments of the electorate, boosting turnout among young people and voters of color is where the Democratic nominee is most situated to broaden his base.

The "Poblano Model" best articulates the potential benefits of targeted voter mobilization. "Poblano" is Nate Silver, a formerly anonymous 30-year-old statistician, one-time DailyKos diarist and author of the website FiveThirtyEight.com. Silver has garnered considerable notoriety with his clever regression model—an electoral simulation engine that uses state-by-state polling data and demographic variables to predict election outcomes in individual states. Using the formula in early May, the blogger correctly projected the results of the critical primaries in Indiana and North Carolina, outperforming five major national polling operations.

In mid-May, Silver turned his attention to the general election, working with the

race. The results were instructive.

Consider Rock the Vote's target audience. Silver estimates that boosting the youth vote by 25 percent nationwide would give Obama 16 additional electoral votes, mainly in the Upper Midwest (Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin) where youth turnout is historically high. A jump in Latino rates could play a key factor in the Mountain West states of Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico, as well.

But the African-American turnout could be the key to the election. According to average head-to-head polling numbers, blacks break for Obama at a 94 percent to 6 percent clip. With each 10 percent increase in black turnout nationwide, Obama gains an average of 13 electoral votes, while his chance of winning jumps by almost 7 percentage points.

The U.S. senator from Illinois stands to gain the most in battleground Rustbelt states like Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, as well as in southern states—North Carolina and Virginia among them—where Democrats have struggled at the presidential level for decades.

"There are scenarios," Silver told ProgressIllinois.com, "where you could really have—not a landslide—but Obama winning 350-plus electoral votes ... just with a mild increase in African-American turnout."

Like all electoral estimates, Silver's analysis should be taken with a sizeable grain of salt. Polls this early in the process aren't reliable and the regression model has its flaws. Being young and black isn't mutually exclusive, a crossover that the

A long fall?

The beauty of Obama's registration drive is its universal value. Some progressive activists have raised concerns about the senator's growing consolidation of the party apparatus, embodied in his rejection of liberal independent 527 organizations that can't openly support a candidate but can run negative advertisements. However, voter registration outreach doesn't stand up to the same scrutiny.

"I don't think that the Obama campaign has the capacity to replace anything that's currently in the field," says Slater, "nor do I think it really has the ability to undermine the effectiveness of any of the work the nonprofit sector is doing because of the size of the audience."

Democratic candidates at the congressional and statewide levels will ultimately benefit as well: the more Democratic voters that exercise their franchise, the more races a resource-strapped GOP will have to defend.

"That's the big wild card for Republicans," Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen recently told the *Washington Post*. "They can't plan on a conventional turnout scenario if Barack Obama is the nominee."

Like many Michigan Democrats, Schwartz says that bringing new voters into the fold will keep the state in the Democratic column this fall. If supporters like her are as successful as their favored candidate was on Chicago's South Side in 1992, McCain is in for a long fall and a cold winter. ■

Death Squads in Oaxaca

The Mexican government ignores the assassination of two community radio activists

BY JOHN GIBLER

SAN JUAN COPALA, MEXICO—DRIVING through the back roads of western Oaxaca state in southwestern Mexico, one could often hear 94.9 FM, Radio Copala, “The Voice that Breaks the Silence.” In one of the station’s tag-lines played several times a day, a slow, piercing violin gave way to the languid voice of a woman singing in Spanish: “I am a rebel because the world has made me that way, because no one ever treated me with love, because no one ever wanted to listen to me.”

But amid such overwrought sadness, a strong—and perhaps hurried—young woman’s voice would interrupt: “Some people think that we are too young to know.” And then a second young female voice interjects: “They should know that we are too young to die.”

Those voices belonged to Teresa Bautista Merino, 24, and Felicitas Martínez Sánchez, 21, two of six young producers and hosts at Radio Copala—a project of the recently autonomous municipality of San Juan Copala, and the first radio station to broadcast in both Spanish and the Triqui indigenous language.

The broadcast launched in January. By April, Teresa and Felicitas were dead.

Political Assassination

On April 7, Teresa and Felicitas rode in the backseat of Faustino Vázquez’s car on their way to a community radio workshop in Oaxaca City. They held Faustino’s 2-year-old son, Augustín, between them. In the front passenger seat rode Faustino’s wife, Cristina, and their 4-year-old son, Jaciel.

“We were going downhill, with a bald



An AK-47 bullet entered Faustino Vázquez’s chest and exited through his shoulder. Another shot pierced his wrist.

JOHN GIBLER

cliff on the right,” says Faustino. “Before we went down, I noticed an access road from the highway and said, ‘Look at that new white pickup parked there.’”

Seconds later, as they rounded the curve at the bottom of the hill, Faustino looked again to the right. “There were seven men up on the hill,” he says, “and they began to shoot at us.”

Bullets pierced the windshield, hitting Faustino’s left wrist and shoulder, and grazing his right arm, leg and head. Two bullets also grazed the back of Jaciel’s head; he lost consciousness. A bullet shattered Cristina’s left arm.

“The motor shut off,” Faustino recalls. “I tried to start it again, but it wouldn’t go. I took the key and ran. When I ran, Teresa and Felicitas were still alive. I shouted, ‘Run! They’re shooting at us!’”

State police later collected some 20 spent shells from AK-47 assault-rifles by the side of the road. The gunmen had descended the embankment and had shot out the back of the car. Teresa and Felicitas died almost instantly. Faustino, Cristina and their two sons survived.

Violence among the Triquis

For centuries, the small Triqui indigenous region—a 300 square-mile green oasis situated in the middle of the dry and eroded indigenous Mixteca region of western Oaxaca—has been known for endemic violence. The Triquis resisted Spanish colonial incursions and, in 1823, were the first indigenous people to rise up against the independent Mexican state, successfully beating back an attempt to evict them from their land.

After the Triquis were victorious in defending their territory in two wars—one in 1823, the other in 1843—the Mexican government decided to shift its approach from direct, armed confrontation to a divide-and-conquer strategy, says Francisco López Bárcenas, a Mixtec indigenous lawyer, historian and author of the forthcoming, *San Juan Copala: Political Domination and Popular Resistance*.

From the late 19th century to the present, internal divisions in the Triqui region, fomented by the state government, have led to cycles of political killings and massacres.



Two AK-47 bullets grazed the back of 4-year-old Jaciel’s head.

JOHN GIBLER

Although local Oaxacan governors have long attributed the violence to indigenous cultural practices, López Bárcenas argues that it stems from the “social decomposition that comes on the heels of the political and economic domination of the state. And it has a history.”

That history, he says, has pit Triqui communities—fighting to maintain autonomy—against those collaborating with the state.

One early battle began over the control of land for coffee production. In the 1920s, non-indigenous speculators brought coffee into the region, often paying Triqui farmers with guns and alcohol. Some Triqui coffee farmers assassinated other Triquis who refused to substitute their traditional corn, bean and squash production for coffee.

“The state first tried to submit the Triquis economically with the transition to coffee production,” says López Bárcenas. “They then tried to submit them politically with the division [in 1948] of the Triqui region into five municipalities and the militarization of the area.”

In the ’70s, the Triqui council of elders tried to end the violence by passing down their community powers to a coalition of young Triqui men who pledged to peacefully unite the region. That peace lasted less than two years. One of the newly appointed communal authorities aligned with the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and killed off his rivals.

During the ’80s, violence escalated again when the Triqui created various political organizations, such as the Movement for Triqui Unification and Struggle (MULT, by its Spanish acronym). The group, one of the most powerful, started as a land-defense organization that directly confronted the state. By the ’90s, however, the organization evolved into a quasi-paramilitary group controlled by a non-Triqui man, Heriberto Pasos, who had longstanding connections to the Oaxaca state government.

Pedro Matias, a Oaxacan journalist who has reported on the region for more than 10 years, says, “Pasos runs the MULT with a leftist discourse but, in reality, they act in relation to the powers of the state.” After the group took control of the region, the killings started again, he says.

In 2006, more than half of the Triqui region split off from the MULT, creating the MULTI (the added “I” standing for “Independent”).

Later that year in June, when Oaxaca erupted in a civil disobedience uprising to protest Gov. Ulises Ruiz’s repression of striking teachers, the MULTI joined the protesters’ organization, the Oaxaca Peoples’ Popular Assembly, or APPO, while the MULT sided with the state government.

The first people killed during the conflict were three Triquis from the MULTI, who were shot down by men wielding AK-47s while on their way to an APPO meeting in Oaxaca City.

"The MULT participated directly in the death squads in Oaxaca in 2006," says López Bárcenas.

A community radio station is born

Jorge Albino Ortiz had a program on Radio La Ley, the APPO station, during the 2006 uprising. "We observed how the radio called people to participate in the various actions of the movement and we wanted to do something like that in our region," he says.

As a result, Radio Copala was born.

Albino Ortiz, who is coordinator of Radio Copala, says the station decided to have three men and three women working at the radio because one of its primary tasks was to encourage women's participation in the new autonomous municipality of San Juan Copala—which MULTI created after it dissolved.

The town, located in the Triqui region, is an amalgamation of 20 Triqui communities. San Juan Copala is cut off from all relations with the Oaxaca state government: it has no cell phone service or telephone lines. Which is why Radio Copala, with its approximately a nine-mile radial reach, was often the only source of news, and frequently focused on themes of autonomy and indigenous rights.

"When we started, we felt really excited to have a radio station in Copala," says Yanira Vásquez, who worked with Teresa

and Felicitas at the station. "Women do not participate much and we were just beginning to promote women's participation in assemblies and meetings and to include their perspectives and interviews about how they see what is happening in the region."

Radio Copala is currently playing only music, though it plans to continue its social and political programming soon. Two signs on the door to the station bear the names of Teresa and Felicitas, declaring: "You will always be present."

Impunity

On April 7, news of the killings traveled around the globe in a matter of hours via e-mail and the Internet. Dozens of national and international human rights organizations, reporters' defense groups and even the United Nations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemned the assassinations and demanded that the Mexican government conduct a rigorous investigation and punish the guilty.

But three weeks after the killing, no government official had gathered testimony from the surviving witnesses.

On April 18, Oaxaca State Attorney General Evencio Martínez told reporters: "What is clear is that the attack was not directed at the two announcers, but at the person [Faustino Vázquez] who was driving the vehicle."

Not true, says Faustino, who says state investigators never interviewed him. Instead, he had to arrange a meeting to give his testimony. Faustino also points out that he was able to easily escape without being pursued, while gunmen appeared to target Teresa and Felicitas.

On April 21, Juan de Dios Castro Lozano, a sub-director of the federal attorney general's office, told a group of Mexican and international human rights investigators that the two young women were not really journalists—they had no journalism degree—but were housewives who just changed the music when callers made requests at the station. His comments provoked immediate criticism, including from the committee of the National Journalism Award, which had given the accolade to Teresa and Felicitas posthumously.

María Dolores París, a professor of rural sociology at the Autonomous University of Mexico, says that the state's claim that Faustino, and not the two women, was the real target of the killers is "absurd," though she says that women have not been targeted in regional violence before.

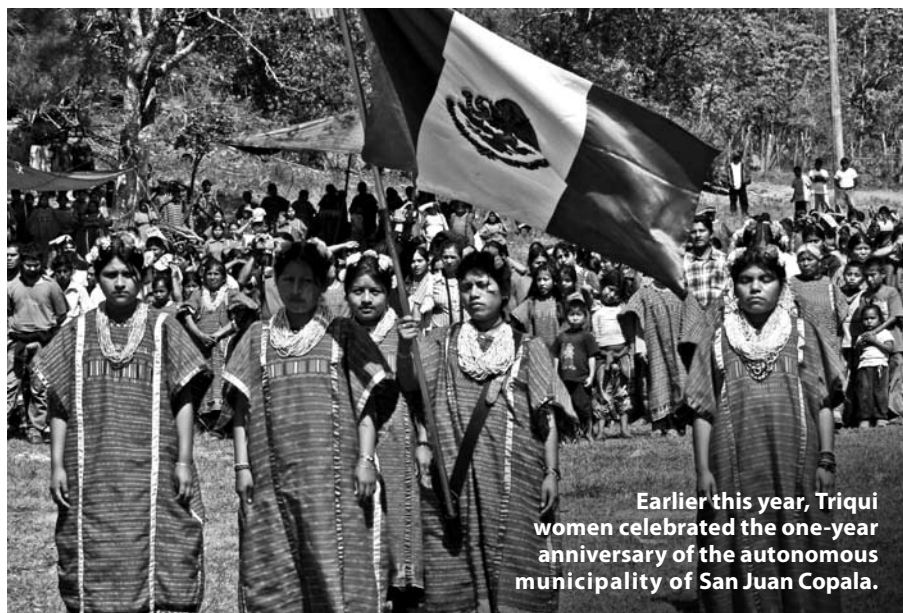
Dolores París, who has worked with Triquis in Oaxaca and Triqui migrants in California for seven years, says the state government goes into the region to foment violence and then "washes its hands of it with theories that the violence comes from the nature of the Triquis themselves."

"I feel certain that the young women were assassinated for their work with the radio station." Then adds: "The intention has always been to strip the Triquis of their land."

Faustino Vázquez and his family have now been thrust into the heart of this violence.

"I am scared," Faustino says. "I will have to be careful now, no more living life like somebody who can just go wherever he likes. If they see me out there, certainly they'll execute me."

Asked if he has any hope for justice, Faustino responds: "With the help of human rights organizations, with the help of journalists, radio, television, with all that putting pressure on the state and federal governments, maybe there will be justice." ■



Earlier this year, Triqui women celebrated the one-year anniversary of the autonomous municipality of San Juan Copala.



Parisian students and sympathizers parade in Montparnasse in 1968.

The Ambiguous Legacy of '68

Forty years ago, what was revolutionized—the world or capitalism?

BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

IN 1968 PARIS, ONE of the best-known graffiti messages on the city's walls was "Structures do not walk on the streets!" In other words, the massive student and workers demonstrations of '68 could not be explained in the terms of structuralism, as determined by the structural changes in society, as in Saussurean structuralism. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's response was that this, precisely, is what happened in '68: structures *did* descend onto the streets. The visible explosive events on the streets were, ultimately, the result of a structural imbalance.

There are good reasons for Lacan's skeptical view. As French scholars Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello noted in 1999's *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, from the '70s on-

ward, a new form of capitalism emerged.

Capitalism abandoned the hierarchical Fordist structure of the production process—which, named after auto maker Henry Ford, enforced a hierarchical and centralized chain of command—and developed a network-based form of organization that accounted for employee initiative and autonomy in the workplace. As a result, we get networks with a multitude of participants, organizing work in teams or by projects, intent on customer satisfaction and public welfare, or worrying about ecology.

In this way, capitalism usurped the left's rhetoric of worker self-management, turning it from an anti-capitalist slogan to a capitalist one. It was Socialism that was conservative, hierarchic and administrative.

The anti-capitalist protests of the '60s supplemented the traditional critique of socioeconomic exploitation with a new cultural critique: alienation of everyday life, commodification of consumption, inauthenticity of a mass society in which we "wear masks" and suffer sexual and other oppressions.

The new capitalism triumphantly appropriated this anti-hierarchical rhetoric of '68, presenting itself as a successful libertarian revolt against the oppressive social organizations of corporate capitalism and "really existing" socialism. This new libertarian spirit is epitomized by dressed-down "cool" capitalists such as Microsoft's Bill Gates and the founders of Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

What survived of the sexual liberation of



In 2005, France saw an increase in violence and damages caused by suburban rioting around the country.

ETIENNE BONAVENTURE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the '60s was the tolerant hedonism readily incorporated into our hegemonic ideology. Today, sexual enjoyment is not only permitted, it is ordained—individuals feel guilty if they are not able to enjoy it. The drive to radical forms of enjoyment (through sexual experiments and drugs or other trance-inducing means) arose at a precise political moment: when “the spirit of '68” had exhausted its political potential.

At this critical point in the mid-'70s, we witnessed a direct, brutal push-toward-the-Real, which assumed three main forms: first, the search for extreme forms of sexual enjoyment; second, the turn toward the Real of an inner experience (Oriental mysticism); and, finally, the rise of leftist political terrorism (Red Army Faction in Germany, Red Brigades in Italy, etc.).

Leftist political terror operated under the belief that, in an epoch in which the masses are totally immersed in capitalist ideological sleep, the standard critique of ideology is no longer operative. Only a resort to the raw Real of direct violence could awaken them.

What these three options share is the withdrawal from concrete socio-political engagement, and we feel the consequences of this withdrawal from engagement today.

AUTUMN 2005'S SUBURB riots in France saw thousands of cars burning and a major outburst of public violence. But what struck the eye was the absence of any positive utopian vision among protesters. If May '68 was a revolt with a utopian vision, the 2005 revolt was an outburst with no pretense to vision.

Here's proof of the common aphorism that we live in a post-ideological era: The protesters in the Paris suburbs made no particular demands. There was only an insistence on *recognition*, based on a vague, non-articulated resentment.

The fact that there was *no* program in the burning of Paris suburbs tells us that we inhabit a universe in which, though it celebrates itself as a society of choice, the only option available to the enforced democratic consensus is the explosion of (self-)destructive violence.

Recall here Lacan's challenge to the protesting students in '68: “As revolutionaries, you are hysterics who demand a new master. You will get one.”

And we did get one—in the guise of the post-modern “permissive” master whose domination is all the stronger for being less visible.

While many undoubtedly positive changes accompanied this passage—such

as new freedoms and access to positions of power for women—one should nonetheless raise hard questions: Was this passage from one “spirit of capitalism” to another really all that happened in '68? Was all the drunken enthusiasm of freedom just a means to replacing one form of domination with another?

Things are not so simple. While '68 was gloriously appropriated by the dominant culture as an explosion of sexual freedom and anti-hierarchic creativity, France's Nicholas Sarkozy said in his 2007 presidential campaign that his great task is to make France finally get over '68.

So, what we have is “their” and “our” May '68. In today's ideological memory, “our” basic idea of the May demonstrations—the link between students' protests and workers' strikes—is forgotten.

IF WE LOOK at our predicament with the eyes of '68, we should remember that, at its core, '68 was a rejection of the liberal-capitalist system, a “NO” to the totality of it.

It is easy to make fun of political economist Francis Fukuyama's notion of the “end of history,” of his claim that, in liberal capitalism, we found the best possible social system. But today, the majority *is* Fukuyamaist. Liberal-democratic capitalism is accepted as the finally found formula for the best of all possible worlds, all that is left to do is render it more just, tolerant, etc.

When Marco Cicala, an Italian journalist, recently used the word “capitalism” in an article for the Italian daily *La Repubblica*, his editor asked him if the use of this term was necessary and could he not replace it with a synonym like “economy”?

What better proof of capitalism's triumph in the last three decades than the disappearance of the very term “capitalism”? So, again, the only *true* question today is: Do we endorse this naturalization of capitalism, or does today's global capitalism contain contradictions strong enough to prevent its indefinite reproduction?

There are (at least) four such antagonisms: the looming threat of *ecological* catastrophe; the inappropriateness of *private property* rights for so-called “intellectual property”; the socio-ethical im-

plications of *new techno-scientific developments* (especially in biogenetics); and, last but not least, *new forms of apartheid*, in the form of new walls and slums.

The first three antagonisms concern the domains of what political theorists Michael Hardt and Toni Negri call “commons”—the shared substance of our social being whose privatization is a violent act that should be resisted with violent means, if necessary (violence against private property, that is).

The commons of external nature are threatened by pollution and exploitation (from oil to forests and natural habitat itself); *the commons of internal nature* (the biogenetic inheritance of humanity) are threatened by technological interference; and *the commons of culture*—the socialized forms of “cognitive” capital, primarily language, our means of communication and education, but also the shared infrastructure of public transport, electricity, post, etc.—are privatized for profit. (If Bill Gates were to be allowed a monopoly, we would have reached the absurd situation in which a private individual would have owned the software texture of our basic network of communication.)

We are gradually becoming aware of the destructive potential, up to the self-annihilation of humanity itself, that could be unleashed if the capitalist logic of enclosing these commons is allowed a free run.

ECONOMIST NICHOLAS STERN rightly characterized the climate crisis as “the greatest market failure in human history.”

There is an increasing awareness that we need global environmental citizenship, a political space to address climate change as a matter of common concern of all humanity.

One should give weight to the terms “global citizenship” and “common concern.” Doesn’t this desire to establish a global political organization and engagement that will neutralize and channel market forces mean that we are in need of a properly communist perspective? The need to protect the “commons” justifies the resuscitation of the notion of Communism: It enables us to see the ongoing “enclosure” of our commons

as a process of proletarianization of those who are thereby excluded from their own substance.

It is, however, only the antagonism between the Included and the Excluded that properly justifies the term Communism. In slums around the world, we are witnessing the fast growth of a population outside state control, living in con-

If the principle task of the last century was to awaken the rural population of Asia and Africa, the task of the 21st century is to politicize the destructured masses of slum-dwellers.

ditions outside the law, in terrible need of minimal forms of self-organization. Although marginalized laborers, redundant civil servants and ex-peasants make up this population, they are not simply a redundant surplus: They are incorporated into the global economy, many working as informal wage workers or self-employed entrepreneurs, with no adequate health or social security coverage. (The main source of their rise is the inclusion of the Third World countries in the global economy, with cheap food imports from the First World countries ruining local agriculture.) These new slum dwellers are not an unfortunate accident, but a necessary product of the innermost logic of global capitalism.

Whoever lives in the *favelas*—or shanty towns—of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, or in Shanghai, China, is not essentially different from someone who lives in the *banlieues*—or outskirts—of Paris or the ghettos of Chicago.

If the principal task of the 19th century’s emancipatory politics was to break the monopoly of the bourgeois liberals by politicizing the working class, and if the task of the 20th century was to politically awaken the immense rural population of Asia and Africa, the principal task of the 21st century is to politicize—organize and discipline—the “destructured masses” of slum-dwellers.

If we ignore this problem of the Excluded, all other antagonisms lose their subversive edge.

Ecology turns into a problem of sustainable development. Intellectual property turns into a complex legal challenge. Biogenetics becomes an ethical issue. Corporations—like Whole Foods and Starbucks—enjoy favor among liberals even though they engage in anti-union activities; they just sell products with a progressive spin.

You buy coffee made with beans bought at above fair-market value.

You drive a hybrid vehicle.

You buy from companies that provide good benefits for their customers (according to corporation’s standards).

In short, without the antagonism between the Included and the Excluded, we may well find ourselves in a world in which Bill Gates is the greatest humanitarian fighting poverty and diseases, and NewCorp’s Rupert Murdoch the greatest environmentalist mobilizing hundreds of millions through his media empire.

In contrast to the classic image of proletarians who have “nothing to lose but their chains,” we are thus ALL in danger of losing ALL. The risk is that we will be reduced to abstract empty Cartesian subjects deprived of substantial content, dispossessed of symbolic substance, our genetic base manipulated, vegetating in an unlivable environment.

These triple threats to our being make all of us potential proletarians. And the only way to prevent actually becoming one is to act preventively.

The true legacy of ’68 is best encapsulated in the formula *Soyons realistes, demandons l’impossible!* (Let’s be realists, demand the impossible.)

Today’s utopia is the belief that the existing global system can reproduce itself indefinitely. The only way to be realistic is to envision what, within the coordinates of this system, cannot but appear as impossible. ■

The Price of One Iraqi Life

U.S. military tries to pacify grieving Iraqis with condolence payments

BY JAMES FOLEY

LSA ANACONDA, IRAQ—THE WOMAN named Sabah is wearing a black dress and scarf as she sits across the desk from Sgt. Jonathan Fondow inside a small trailer.

“Please tell her we’re extremely sorry and we know no amount can replace her loss,” Fondow, an Army paralegal, says through the interpreter. Sabah’s body stiffens, her expression suspended between grimace and complete loss.

Master Sgt. Troy Baylis then comes from the other side of the room and, after getting a signature from Sabah, begins to count the money onto the desk: \$1,000 U.S.—in stacked \$50 bills. Sabah takes the money and shuffles out of the trailer office.

Her son, Mohamed, in his mid-20s, was from nearby Albu Hisma, in Salah ad-Din Province, about an hour north of Baghdad. Mohamed had been a member of the Sons of Iraq (SOI), a group of local, armed civilians also known as Concerned Local Citizens, who are paid by the U.S. military to guard checkpoints in problem areas around Iraq, mostly within the Sunni Triangle northwest of Baghdad.

Army reports said Mohamed was guarding a rooftop when U.S. Apache helicopters saw an armed man who was not supposed to be stationed there. Pilots tried to communicate to him via radio to put his gun down, but when he did not, the Apaches opened fire, killing Mohamed instantly. The pilots later said they had seen the colored flares of tracer bullets fired at them.

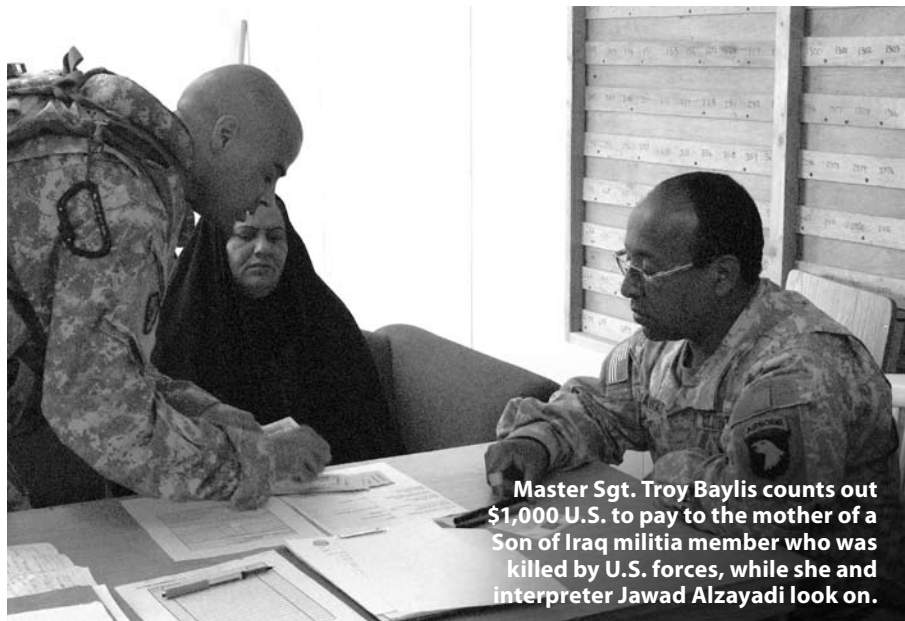
Once U.S. forces realized they had killed a Son of Iraq, they went to Mohamed’s house to make a condolence payment. According to Fondow, who investigates local Iraqi combat damage claims under the watch of the 2nd Battalion 320th Field Artillery Regiment of

the 101st Airborne Division, Mohamed’s uncle and cousin convinced the soldiers that the two of them were responsible for supporting his orphaned children. They accepted the Army’s condolence payment and promptly disappeared.

This betrayal left Sabah with \$1,000 instead of the \$2,500 typically paid in condolence to families of Iraqi civilians who are killed during combat operations.

The amount seems minuscule by U.S. standards, but a non-Westerner employed on base often earns between \$12 to \$18 a day, according to Sgt. Erin Murphy, a paralegal for the 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command. A payment of \$2,500 is equivalent to a year’s income, she says.

Iraq’s 2007 per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was approximately \$3,600, according to the CIA World Fact Book. But with unemployment hovering between 20 percent to 30 percent, the yearly income of a subsistence-level farmer in Albu Hishma could be substantially less.



Master Sgt. Troy Baylis counts out \$1,000 U.S. to pay to the mother of a Son of Iraq militia member who was killed by U.S. forces, while she and interpreter Jawad Alzayadi look on.

COURTESY OF THE INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

“I feel if coalition forces are at fault, we should pay them,” Fondow says. “If we don’t pay them, what are they going to do?”

Fondow normally makes two to three accidental death payments per month in this mixed Sunni-Shiite area around the city of Balad, which has recently seen hundreds of men with insurgent histories enter reconciliation agreements with U.S. troops. According to the terms, if the men lay down their arms and agree to appear before an Iraqi judge, U.S. forces agree to stop actively hunting them.

A small history of payments

“Soldiers who deploy want to feel that they are making a difference,” Capt. Wojciech Kornacki, Judge Advocate for 1st Armored Division chief of foreign claims, says, “and making payments for claims makes you feel that way.” Many of those same families who received the payment will come back to report on insurgent recruiting efforts, he added.

But “each unit handles claims differently,” Fondow says. “We’re high on morale, but all it takes is to lose one soldier to change the view,” implying that the level of enemy attacks influences how these discretionary payments are made.

The conservative total death toll for Iraqi civilians in this war is reported to be between 84,050 and 91,713, according to IraqiBodyCount.org, a public site that has counted media reports of violent non-combatant deaths in Iraq since the 2003 invasion. The British journal *Lancet* estimates the civilian death toll to be in the hundreds of thousands.

If an innocent civilian is killed, a Commander’s Emergency Relief Program (CERP) payment can be made as a condolence from U.S. forces.

The need for CERP began shortly after the 2003 invasion, when commanders realized they had no recourse for damages caused during combat missions, which are not covered under the Foreign Claims Act, says Captain Kornacki. According to Kornacki, the Foreign Claims Act covers only non-combat-related damages. For example if an Army jeep not on a combat patrol, runs into a civilian’s car, the car owner can be paid under the Foreign Claims Act.

In April 2003, soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division recovered a total of \$650 million that had been hidden in panic by Saddam Hussein’s regime, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. The discovery became the seed money for various reconstruction projects during the initial phases of the war.

Congress later approved the first \$180 million to help fund CERP, according to the *Joint Force Quarterly*. (Congressional funding has increased since, including \$500 million in 2004.) In the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, Congress allocated \$977,441,000 for CERP.

Such payments to victims’ families are not an admission of liability, says Kornacki,

‘In Iraq, condolence payments are a cultural norm. When a car collision results in a death, two sheiks will negotiate a nominal payment for funeral expenses that the party at fault will pay.’

nacki, which could potentially open the U.S. military to lawsuits from foreign nationals. Instead, the military calls them “good will payments,” and in a war against an enemy that has been known to pay civilians less than \$100 to plant a roadside bomb, a CERP payment could counter such insurgent enticements, he says.

‘Respect and sympathy’

When Maj. Gen. David Petraeus was still commander of the 101st Brigade in Mosul, he used millions in CERP funds for much publicized rebuilding of schools and hospitals. “Money is the most powerful weapon we have,” Petraeus said at the time.

In Iraq, condolence payments are a cultural norm, says Kornacki. When a car collision results in a death, for example, two sheiks will negotiate a nominal payment for funeral expenses that the party

at fault will pay.

Osman Abdel Karim Hussein, 36, mayor of Adwar—a small city in central Iraq, about 10 miles south of Tikrit—is from a prominent tribal family in Salah ad-Din. He says tribal law traditionally arbitrates all conflicts before Iraqi law enforcement or courts are involved.

In the U.S. program, when soldiers

kick in the wrong door or shoot the wrong person, they leave a claim card for damages, Fondow says. Local sheiks often provide background information as to the character and allegiance of those making the claims.

“If it’s not a ‘target hit,’ more than likely it will be a condolence payment,” Fondow says. “If family members were not on the ‘black list’ [those wanted by coalition forces], it will be a payment.”

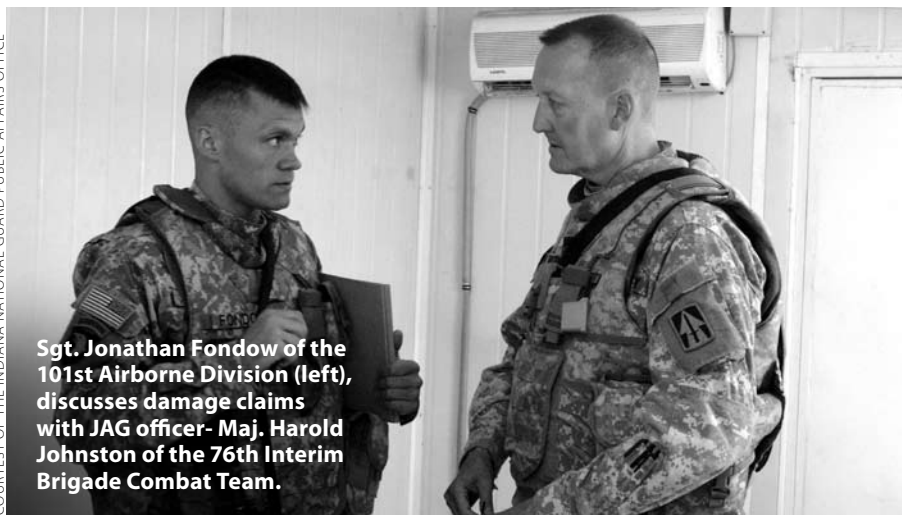
Any payment must follow the chain of command to the brigade commander. If the paralegal recommends a payment of more than \$2,500—in the case of multiple damages or deaths—the case goes to the division level to be approved.

“Iraqis prefer respect and sympathy versus \$2,500 thrown at them,” Kornacki says. “We’ll explain why, if we won’t pay.”

The most difficult part of the job, Fondow says, is investigating legitimate claims when there are so many fraudulent ones. In a case from a few years ago, U.S. forces suspected that insurgents who had fired on them earlier in the week had later tried to file damage claims for vehicles destroyed when troops had returned fire.

Fondow, who is on his third deployment in Iraq, says that in cases when a death occurs, it’s always more complicated. Turning down a legitimate claim opens the risk that family members may turn to insurgents for revenge.

“If they’re trying to feed their children,” he says, “the claims mission is very important. And equally important, is the level of respect it shows.” ■



Sgt. Jonathan Fondow of the 101st Airborne Division (left), discusses damage claims with JAG officer- Maj. Harold Johnston of the 76th Interim Brigade Combat Team.

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Canaries in the Uranium Mine

Navajos gear up for renewed legal battle to protect their life and land

BY KARI LYDERSEN

TEDDY NEZ, A NAVAJO rancher and Vietnam War veteran, lives practically in the shadow of a 40-foot-high pile of radioactive waste abutting his small home outside of Gallup, N.M. Nez has colon cancer, which he treats with herbs—but not with ones growing near his house, because those could be contaminated with uranium.

Thousands of Navajo have developed lung cancer, kidney disease and other serious illnesses linked to uranium mining—which has supplied the U.S. government with material for nuclear weapons and power plants from the 1940s through the '80s. (Agencies such as the World Health Organization have documented the severe health effects of uranium exposure.)

Uranium mining in the United States came to a near halt in the early '90s because of low uranium prices, related largely to the cooling of the arms race and public disillusionment with nuclear power. But now, thanks to skyrocketing oil prices and renewed interest in nuclear energy, companies are once again planning to mine uranium in and around Navajo land.

Jeff Spitz, a Chicago filmmaker who in the late '90s shot *Return of Navajo Boy*—a documentary that followed a family affected by uranium—says Navajo families at the time thought they would have to deal with only the *legacy* of uranium.

"No one was interested [then] except the people suffering from uranium's effects," says Spitz, who is working on an epilogue to the film. "After traveling down this path already, I feel like it's about to start all over again."

'100 percent undrinkable'

The first U.S. uranium boom started in the '40s before the government acknowl-



edged that the metal posed serious health risks. It was another 20 years before the dangers were officially accepted and publicized, and it took decades more for many Navajos to get the message. Not understanding the risks, Navajo families built their homes out of uranium-tainted rocks and the crushed remains of uranium ore. Children played amid the waste.

While there was little or no opposition to the first wave of uranium mining on Navajo land, the tribe and other uranium-mining opponents are now using legal and community action to protect themselves.

The New Mexico Environmental Law Center is appealing the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's 1998 decision to allow the company Hydro Resources Inc. (HRI) to leach uranium from aquifers that supply water to the Navajo towns of Crownpoint and Church Rock in western New Mexico.

Instead of taking the uranium-laced

ore from the ground, HRI is hoping to use a process—called in situ recovery (ISR) or in situ leaching (ISL)—that involves injecting oxygenated water into uranium-laden aquifers to bond with the uranium and allow it to be pumped out. Although it is less disruptive and waste-producing than traditional mining, critics say it could easily contaminate the water supply because it destabilizes uranium in the aquifer.

"Fifteen thousand people depend on that water supply for their domestic and agricultural needs," says Eric Jantz, the lead attorney in the appeal. "There is a 100 percent chance it will be undrinkable afterwards."

Randy Foote, New Mexico operations director for Texas-based Uranium Resources Inc., Hydro Resources' parent company, asserts that the aquifers will be cleansed with reverse osmosis treatments, returning the water to its pre-

mining condition. Jantz doesn't buy it.

"With in situ mining, the aquifer is intentionally polluted, and they can never get all the uranium out," he says. "There has never been a successful restoration of an ISL aquifer. That aquifer becomes a sacrifice."

Jantz's appeal also argues that the amount Hydro Resources plans to set aside for restoration is too low. The company proposed a \$9 million restoration fund for one section of the project. It would have to put down only a third of that up front. But an expert contracted by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center says it could take close to \$24 million to adequately restore that site.

"One of two things would happen," says Jantz. "Either taxpayers would be stuck with the bill. Or, the more likely scenario is it just wouldn't get cleaned up."

In 2005, the Navajo Nation banned uranium mining and milling on its land, and in 2006, an Indigenous World Uranium Summit was held at the Navajo capital of Window Rock, about 150 miles east of Flagstaff, Ariz.

Uranium Resources and other companies seeking to do business in New Mexico stress they are looking only at private land. But the area they want to mine has a complex patchwork of subsurface mineral and water rights that underlie an already complicated checkerboard of tribal and non-tribal land. Tribal leaders argue their ban should prevent these proposed operations.

The U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals is currently deciding whether the Crownpoint and Church Rock sites—where Uranium Resources wants to conduct in situ mining—is tribal land.

A legacy of waste

Three-quarters of the more than 1,000 uranium mines that once operated in the area have not been cleaned up, according to the Southwest Research and Information Center, a nonprofit advocacy group. Most of the mining companies pulled up stakes without ever cleaning their waste.

Because these companies sold uranium to the U.S. government, people have long argued that the government should be taking care of the environmental cleanup. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has spearheaded some efforts, but

piles of uranium waste are still scattered throughout large swaths of Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah.

The EPA is creating draft action plans regarding uranium on the Navajo Nation. But in a January letter to the agency, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) said the draft lacks a

Nez shows visitors large color photos of lambs born abnormally—bright pink and hairless, with yellow eyes. Many of them die soon after birth. He attributes this to uranium in the drinking water.

clear course of action. Instead, Waxman proposed a five-year multi-agency plan, including mine cleanup, case studies on adverse health effects and an examination of alternative water supplies.

In response to public and governmental pressure, Uranium Resources and other companies plan to pay into a "legacy fund" for cleanup of past uranium mining, though they emphasize they are not the ones who created the mess. The amount they would pay is up for debate.

This spring, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson (D) vetoed a bill that opponents described as "industry-friendly." It would have mandated new mining operations pay 50 cents per pound of uranium harvested into this legacy fund. With uranium prices reaching highs above \$100 a pound in the past year, many call the amount proposed in the bill too low.

The federal government didn't enact guidelines to protect uranium workers from dangerous exposure until 1971. But many former miners say they worked in dirty conditions without safety equipment even after the measures passed.

"We had no respirators, you'd have sweat running down your face with the uranium dust getting in your ears, nose and mouth," says Larry J. King, a Navajo rancher who worked in New Mexico uranium mines from 1975 to 1982. "You couldn't help but swallow it."

In 1990, Congress passed legislation to give \$100,000 payments (later raised to \$150,000) to uranium miners—many of them Navajo—who were working prior

to the 1971 regulations. As of June 2007, 4,560 miners had received \$455 million. (Congress also created payments for uranium ore transporters and millers, as well as for people in parts of Arizona, Nevada and Utah who were exposed to radiation from nuclear weapons testing.)

But in 2000, the fund ran out of money, and many miners died while waiting for

payments. The fund has since been replenished, but victims say that red tape makes receiving payment claims too difficult.

Global and local trends

Companies are now seeking uranium mining and milling permits in Colorado, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and other states. An estimated 660 million pounds of uranium remain in the ground in New Mexico, and at least five companies want to begin mining it.

Uranium Resources hopes to mine 100 million pounds of uranium it owns the rights to, including deposits near Crownpoint. It is also looking to purchase a former Kerr McGee uranium mill in Ambrosia Lake, N.M., to refine uranium ore from traditionally mined deposits.

For the ISR project, Uranium Resources has partnered with Itochu Corp., a Japan-based multinational company with investments in sectors that include textiles, machinery, energy and chemicals.

These global economic trends are not primary concerns to Nez. But the effects he sees on his dusty little farm are.

He shows visitors large color photos of lambs born abnormally—bright pink and hairless, with yellow eyes. Many of them die soon after birth. He attributes this to uranium in the drinking water.

Nez says people often ask why he doesn't move away from the contaminated land. But, he replies, this is his people's land, and he can't imagine himself anywhere else.

"I'm not leaving. I just want them to clean up this pile of uranium." ■

Anthropologists At War

New military program that embeds anthropologists with soldiers has academics up in arms

BY BILL STAMETS

NOT IN OUR NAME. That could be the battle cry of American anthropologists resisting the recent use of their discipline in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The U.S. Army is sending anthropologists into the field to help soldiers counter insurgents. The program, called Human Terrain System (HTS), responds to combat brigade commanders' 2006 call for "operationally relevant cultural knowledge."

In June, 12 Human Terrain Teams (HTT)—each made up of three military members and three civilians—were expected to join combat brigades in either Iraq or Afghanistan. By the end of September, another 12 will deploy.

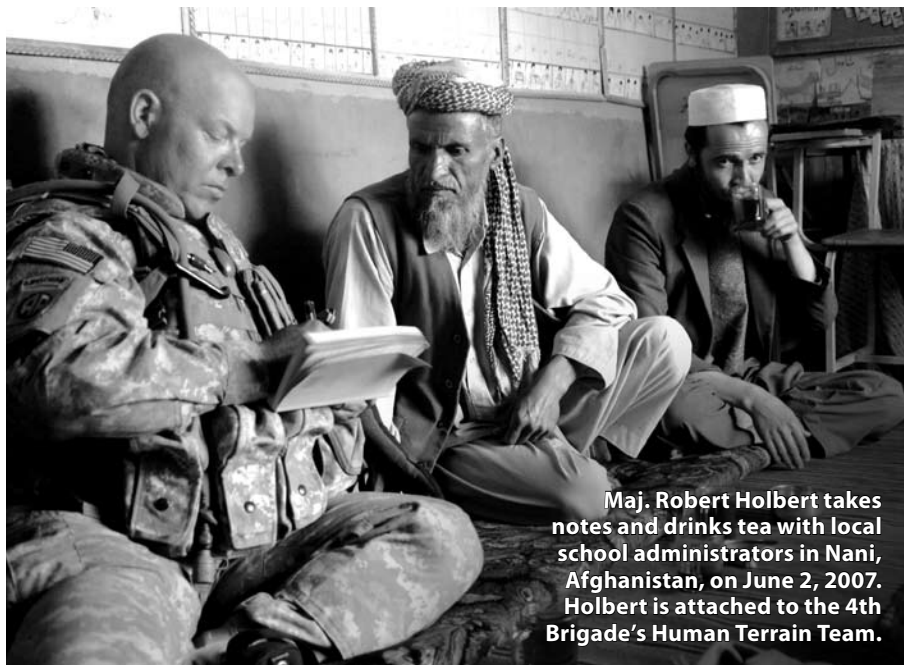
Training for the six-member teams occurs at the Army's Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The teams spend six to nine months in Iraq or Afghanistan and spend anywhere from three days to three weeks in a given locale, according to James K. Greer, deputy program manager of the Human Terrain System.

According to HTT's website: "The role of the HTTs is to help the troops better understand who is NOT their enemy." The teams help the U.S. Army "influence the population through non-lethal means."

At an April 24 hearing at the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, Col. Martin Schweitzer testified that HTS helped decrease "kinetic operations" by 60 to 70 percent in his brigade's area of operations in Afghanistan.

"We must understand the culture to win," Schweitzer testified.

In 2007, his 4th Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division was the first to use a Human Terrain Team. It was also the first to have an HTT fatality. On May 7, 2008, a roadside bomb in the Afghan province



Maj. Robert Holbert takes notes and drinks tea with local school administrators in Nani, Afghanistan, on June 2, 2007. Holbert is attached to the 4th Brigade's Human Terrain Team.

DOD PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MICHAEL L. CASTELL, U.S. ARMY

of Khowst killed Michael Bhatia, an Oxford doctoral candidate and the brigade's field social scientist. After his year-long contract, Bhatia had planned to finish his dissertation titled "The Mujahideen: A Study of Combatant Motives in Afghanistan, 1978-2005."

Anthropologists outsourced

BAE Systems, a global defense firm, has recruited and trained HTT members since 2006. To date, BAE has placed about 30 field social scientists in HTTs, says Scott Fazekas, a BAE press contact.

Academics at home have been raising a ruckus over the military's use of a mobilized, militarized and weaponized anthropology. In September, the Network of Concerned Anthropologists formed to circulate a Pledge of Non-participation in Counterinsurgency. The pledge has since garnered nearly 1,000 signatures.

Last November, at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., the executive board of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) issued a statement deeming HTS's "application of anthropological expertise" both "problematic" and "unacceptable."

"The impact of anti-HTS activists on program recruitment in universities, especially in anthropology departments, is profound," Zenia Helbig, an academic kicked out of HTS, tells *In These Times*. Helbig brought BAE Systems—and its three HTS contracts, estimated at \$160 million—to the attention of the Project on Government Oversight, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that investigates corruption in the federal government.

Felix Moos, an anthropology professor at the University of Kansas who has taught some HTT classes, concedes, "Because we are outsourcing the war, we are

giving the title of 'anthropologist' to people who are not really anthropologists."

In a May 6 letter to Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), Roberto J. González, an anthropology professor at San Jose State University and a member of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists, attacked HTS: "The program is dysfunctional, wasteful, and perhaps even fraudulent. As an anthropologist, it is also clear to me that HTS simply cannot work as its proponents claim."

Key players

Counterinsurgency is the specialty of two key players in the Pentagon's post-9/11 turn to culture.

Anthropologist Montgomery McFate is the senior social science adviser to the HTS program. Her 1995 thesis at Yale University was "Pax Britannica: British Counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland." David J. Kilcullen is a policy-planning adviser in the State Department. His 2000 thesis at the University of New South Wales–Australian Defense Force Academy was titled "The Political Consequences of Military Operations in Indonesia 1945-99: A Fieldwork Analysis of the Political Power-Diffusion Effects of Guerrilla Conflict." Kilcullen's non-academic credentials include a stint in the Australian Army as a commander of counterinsurgency operations in East Timor.

McFate is credited with jumpstarting a program—called the Cultural Operational Research Human Terrain System—at the Department of Defense (DOD) that was the springboard for HTS.

"Cultural ignorance can kill," argued McFate in a 2005 article published in *Joint Forces Quarterly*. "Cultural knowledge and warfare are inextricably bound. ... The U.S. Armed Forces must adopt an ethnographer's view of the world."

It has begun to do so. A piece in the Jan. 1, 2007, *Field Artillery Journal* briefed officers on greeting their Iraqi Army counterparts: "If you are especially close, a kiss on the cheek may become commonplace. You will get used to it—it is a compliment indicating that your status has been raised to 'brother.'" Marines now receive how-to pamphlets, such as "Cultural Considerations in House Occupations," for tips

"on the Iraqi human dynamics when coalition forces enter Iraq residences."

"Normality in Kandahar is not the same as in Kansas," Kilcullen wrote in a 2006 memo e-mailed to military officers. "Armed social work" is his pithy take on culturally aware counterinsurgency.

He posts tips from the front: "Stop your people fraternizing with local children. Your troops are homesick; they want to drop their guard with the kids. But children are sharp-eyed, lacking in empathy and willing to commit atrocities their elders would shrink from."

Troops can also acquire "practical cultural knowledge, sensitivity and awareness" by playing "Mission to Iraq." According to its promo materials, this \$795 video game has "socially intelligent virtual humans" driven by "cultural puppets." Alelo, the company that makes it, also sells Dari and Pashto versions for Afghan deployments.

Testifying before the 2004 Armed Services Committee, retired Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales proposed "a cadre of global scouts, well educated, with a penchant for languages and a comfort with strange and distant places."

He continued: "These soldiers should be given time to immerse themselves in a single culture and to establish trust with those willing to trust them," saying that ethnographic embeddees ought to "stay for extended periods within the countries, not just a few years but perhaps decades."

Scales, a defense consultant with a doctorate in history from Duke University, has other ideas for anthropologizing the Army. He wrote this in a 2004 article "Culture-Centric Warfare" for the Naval Institute's *Proceedings* magazine:

The military spends millions to create urban combat sites designed to train soldiers how to kill an enemy in cities. But perhaps equally useful might be urban sites optimized to teach soldiers how to coexist with and cultivate trust and understanding among indigenous peoples inside foreign urban settings. Such centers would immerse young soldiers within a simulated Middle Eastern city, perhaps near a mosque or busy marketplace, where they would be confronted with various crises precipitated by expatriate role players who would seek to agitate and incite a local mob to violence.

"War is a thinking man's game," argues

Scales. Gen. David Petraeus, a Princeton Ph.D. and commander of the Multi-National Force, agrees, telling Germany's *Der Spiegel* magazine in December 2006: "Counterinsurgency operations are war at the graduate level, they're thinking man's warfare."

Contested cultural terrain

Between April 25 and 27, the Human Terrain System came under fire at the Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency conference held at the University of Chicago. Organized by John D. Kelly, chair of U.C.'s Anthropology Department, and three U.C. doctoral candidates, the conference aimed to "pursue the full implications of the connection now being sought by the U.S. military between culture and insurgency."

"HTS is among the largest social science projects in history," argued González, who has sparred in the pages of *Anthropology Today* with Kilcullen, who was invited but did not attend, and with McFate, who was not invited.

"I would have been delighted to attend," she wrote in an e-mail to *In These Times*. "It's not everyday that there's a conference on the subject."

"The national security structure in the U.S. needs to be infused with anthropology, a discipline invented to support warfighting in the tribal zone," McFate urged in her 2005 *Joint Forces Quarterly* article.

Many of McFate's colleagues at the Chicago gathering challenged that spin on their discipline. González told the conference-goers, "In the end, it is by sharing what [anthropologists have] learned with the general public—not political, military or corporate elites—that we might spark lasting progressive change in democratic societies."

Another dissenter is David Price, an anthropology professor at Saint Martin's College in Lacey, Wash., who researches the history of American anthropologists colluding with the American government.

Military planners "dream that culture can fix what thousands of tons of munitions broke," Price said at the gathering. "We should use anthropology to keep us out of these invasion fiascos in the first place." ■

BY DAVID SIROTA

The Free Trade Heretic

Ha-Joon Chang is an award-winning Cambridge economist whose new book, *Bad Samaritans*, explodes what its subtitle calls “the myth of free trade.” At a time when Democrats are bashing NAFTA and Republicans are championing a NAFTA-style free trade deal with Colombia,

Chang shows how the entire debate over trade has divorced itself from history and economic reality. Phrases like “free trade,” in fact, are misnomers unto themselves, leading the world into a globalization debate whose basic premises are inaccurate.

But that’s not all that is inaccurate. Chang says that while the media and political elite lead us to believe industrialized countries achieved their wealth by eliminating tariffs, history suggests it’s exactly the opposite: The strategic use of tariffs is precisely what built the industrialized world into an economic powerhouse. *Bad Samaritans* shows that wealthy countries’ demands on poor countries to reduce tariffs is a way to keep the developing world in a subservient role—or a means to “kick away the ladder,” as he puts it.

But the brilliance of *Bad Samaritans* doesn’t derive solely from its forceful arguments or irrefutable history, but also from its conversational style—a rare quality in the esoteric world of economics. Not geared toward the academics, pundits and elites whose propaganda has polluted the globalization debate, Chang’s book is for the rest of us who are getting screwed by unfair trade policies.

***Bad Samaritans* claims that most trade “experts” ignore the history of trade policy in building up industrialized countries. Specifically, you assert that protection and tariffs—not free trade—have always been a cornerstone of any**

successful industrial policy. Why do you think these experts ignore this history?

First of all, there is the power of ideology. There is no reason why even the mainstream neoclassical economists should support free trade. However, allegiance to free trade has become the union card for “kosher” economists.

Even economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, who made his name by building mathematical models showing the limits of free trade, had to cover himself by emphasizing that, despite his models’ conclusions against free trade, he does not actually recommend government intervention because we “cannot trust the government.” This prompted the Chicago economist Robert Lucas to ask ironically why, then, Krugman bothered to build those models in the first place.

Secondly, there is the influence of special interests. Having built their whole careers advocating a certain worldview, free-trade economists have a lot to lose if they admit they have been wrong—even if faced with contrary evidence. Also, when you advocate ideas that serve powerful interests, you get more research grants, invitations to more prominent public forums, higher lecturing fees and more air time and column inches.

Then there is the sheer power of numbers. When 99 percent of economists believe in free trade, it is easy to pretend that the 1 percent does not exist or that they are incompetent. With their numerical

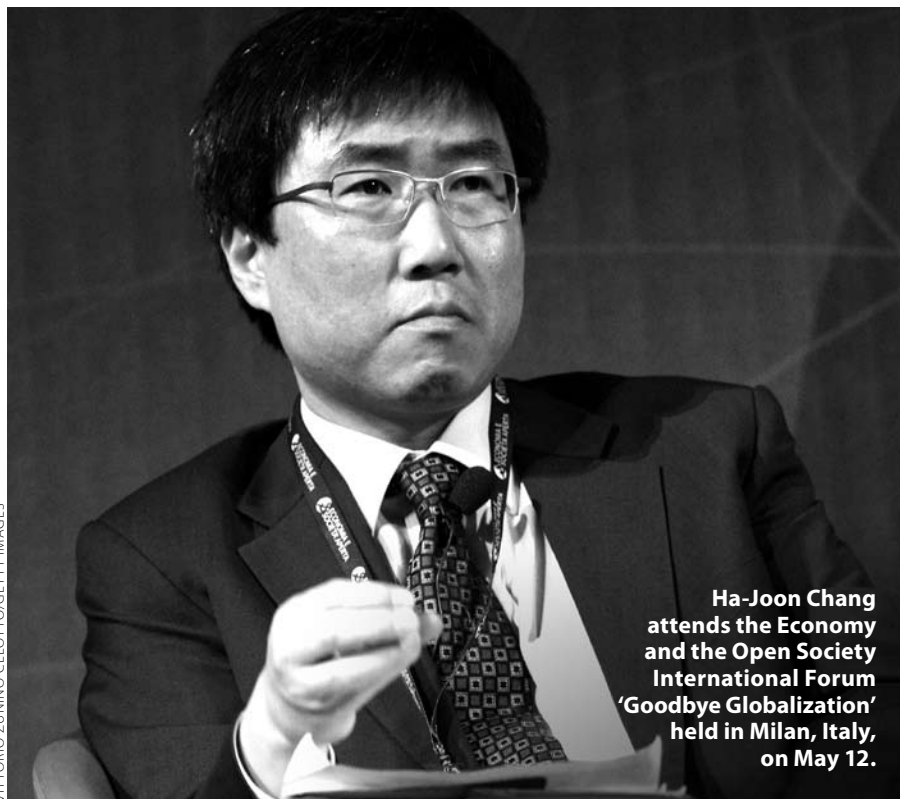
advantage, free-trade economists can always assert that professional consensus is on their side. Of course, if the numerical majority was always right, the sun would still be going around the earth and the earth would still be flat.

As world populations become angrier and angrier with current trade policies, could the field of economics change from its current free-trade orthodoxy?

Let’s not forget that in much of the world for much of the time, free-trade theory was *not* an orthodoxy, even in economics. It was the orthodoxy in the late 19th and the early 20th century in Britain and its sphere of influence—but elsewhere, it was not the orthodoxy. Even during that time, protectionist theory was the orthodoxy in the United States, Germany and many other countries. In the 1960s and ’70s, in much of the developing world, free-trade theory was discredited because people there had seen how free trade imposed on them by imperialism prevented their economic development.

The current dominance of free trade is overwhelming, but it won’t last forever. Free-trade policy of the last quarter of a century has failed to deliver the prosperity that it had promised, and too many of its “losers” have not been compensated for their sacrifices. An increasing, although still small, number of mainstream economists are coming out against free trade (Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz being the most prominent example).

Economics is not a science like physics or chemistry, where if a theory becomes an orthodoxy, nothing short of a scientific revolution will dislodge it. If public opinion changes and the world changes, the economics profession can, and will, change—although with a time lag, given the tenure system.



Ha-Joon Chang
attends the Economy
and the Open Society
International Forum
'Goodbye Globalization'
held in Milan, Italy,
on May 12.

Do you think the terms of the trade debate—free trade vs. protectionism—accurately portray the debate?

I agree with the spirit behind that question. In the present atmosphere, once you say anything positive about protectionism, people dismiss you as a supporter of North Korea or Cuba.

The reality is that few countries practice pure free trade or pure protectionism. Most countries practice free trade in some areas and protectionism in others, with varying mixes across countries. This is basically because policy-makers instinctively understand that different sectors have different needs—sectors that are just emerging or in decline need more protection and subsidies in the same way that children and the elderly need more support than able-bodied adults do.

If no one listens to the lessons of your book and the industrialized countries continue to push their current trade policies, what will be the results?

The result will be the persistence of slow growth and income inequality in developing countries. We have seen this in the last 25 years of free-trade orthodoxy. Don't forget that the developing countries used to grow at almost double the rate in

the "bad old days" of protectionism in the 1960s and '70s, compared to the next two decades of trade liberalization. Inequality has also grown significantly in many countries in the last 20-to-25 years.

While growth has picked up in some developing countries in the last few years, this was largely because some resource-rich developing countries have benefited from the enormous demands generated by China and, to a lesser extent, India—two countries that, while gradually liberalizing, definitely have not used the free-trade policy recommended by the orthodoxy.

If current free-trade deals are so bad for developing countries, how come so many of them—or at least their governments—agree to them?

There are a lot of people in developing countries that would benefit from free trade. Brazilian cattle ranchers, like the American cotton plantation owners of the South in the 19th century, would be delighted if they could export their beef freely to the United States and import consumer goods freely from the United States, Japan or Europe. When these people control the government, developing countries will support free trade.

And some countries are simply desperate. Many small Central American countries feel that they do not have the luxury of promoting their own industries. If they can increase their exports to, say, the United States, even by a little bit, by signing a bilateral free-trade agreement, it does not matter in the short run if their industries die.

Of course, in the long run, these countries may have benefited from infant industry protection, but their poverty compels them to look for short-term solutions.

And then there are people who advocate free trade for ideological reasons. True, these people may personally benefit by being able to buy cheaper, higher-quality imported consumer goods, but it is not as if they own some business that will benefit from free-trade policy. However, these people still support the policy because they are ideologically convinced that free trade is good for their country.

Democrats have been criticized for advocating only a halt of our current trade policy, but not having any ideas moving forward. What does an alternative trade policy look like?

I think the trade policy advocated by the Democratic candidates is very regressive. It's about preserving the status quo and trying to reduce imports by raising non-tariff barriers—such as labor standards—rather than raising American productivity. It is trying to increase exports by forcing other countries—especially developing countries that have weak bargaining power—to open their markets more.

A more progressive strategy would accept that the United States should keep its markets reasonably open but that it should be done through upgrading its industries, instead of trying to defend the industries that it has today. Some industries may need to be protected for a period in order to help them restructure, but in the long run, any threat to American jobs and living standards should be dealt with by industrial upgrading.

This is good for the United States—which becomes more productive—and for developing countries, which can increase their exports in more productive industries and thus upgrade their economies. ■



BY BRADFORD PLUMER

The Divided States of America

After the first-ever televised presidential debate between Vice President Richard Nixon and Sen. John F. Kennedy in 1960, a survey in Philadelphia famously found that TV viewers deemed Kennedy the winner, while radio listeners favored

Nixon. In reality, the poll in question was shoddy and unreliable (even if Nixon's sweaty, unshaven mug *had* looked gruesome on the small screen). But that didn't matter to Nixon. The lesson he gleaned from defeat that year was that optics were everything, that he had to be far more ruthless about controlling his image from there on out.

And so he was. While staging his big political comeback in the 1968 Republican primary, Nixon scripted every campaign event, handpicking his audiences with the help of 28-year-old media strategist (and future Fox News head) Roger Ailes—and trounced his chief rival, Gov. George Romney, who naively believed that voters might like a little off-the-cuff candor. Later, Nixon would become the first

president to hire a full-time communications director and told his economic advisers to work closely with public relations guru William Safire. Message first, policy second.

Still, Nixon's mastery of the shiny surface of politics would've taken him only so far if he hadn't also possessed another, less-noticed skill—a gift for reading the darker, subterranean moods of American voters. And it's that aspect of Nixon that sits at the center of journalist Rick Perlstein's *Nixonland* (Scribner), a rich new history of the 1960s that tries to pinpoint the origins of America's rightward drift over the last four decades.

Once upon a time—say, late 1965—it was possible to believe that American conservatism was two sweeps

of the broom away from the dustbin of history. President Lyndon Johnson had just vaporized Rep. Barry Goldwater en route to re-election, and scores of new liberal Democrats had swept into Congress to enforce racial equality, expand health-care and declare war on poverty.

Few pundits at the time realized, however, that beneath the surface, all the social upheavals of the '60s were making vast swaths of Middle America susceptible to a new brand of right-wing cultural populism. It was Nixon, master of symbolism, reader of undercurrents, who knew exactly how to exploit this lurking resentment—and, in the process, redraw the nation's electoral map.

Histories of the '60s are hardly in short supply—the Watts riots, the Summer of Love, Attica, Kent State ... familiar events, all. Even so, *Nixonland* manages to distinguish itself brilliantly. Perlstein's talent for scene-setting, his cinematic style, serves to illustrate how the turmoil of the era would have actually looked and felt to the average American—showing, rather than just explaining, why so many in the “silent majority” became alienated from the reigning liberal consensus.

In a gripping chapter on the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago, Perlstein mines old newsreels to offer a frame-by-frame reconstruction of what TV viewers would have seen from their living rooms: New York delegates waving “STOP THE WAR” signs; demonstrators in Grant Park chanting “Kill the pigs”; newscaster David Brinkley sitting agog while police stormed the convention hall.

Perlstein also punctures many longstanding myths about the decade, such as the notion that disgruntled lefties caused all the mayhem of the '60s. Far from it: Right-wing Cuban exiles were firebombing more than a dozen locations in the summer of '68. Minutemen vigilantes tried to burn down a pacifist farm in Connecticut, ending in a shootout with the police. In a ghastly account of the 1967 Newark riots, Perlstein writes how the local police gunned down unarmed civilians in the streets, spilling more blood than the rioters themselves.

Even so, a Harris poll the following year found that most Americans—especially the low-income whites who had formed the backbone of the New Deal coalition—blamed the violence on blacks and the all-too-indulgent “long hairs” ruling the country.

The social upheavals of the '60s made vast swaths of Middle America susceptible to a new brand of right-wing cultural populism. It was Nixon, reader of undercurrents, who knew how to exploit this.

In stepped Nixon—himself a lifelong “serial collector of resentments,” as Perlstein calls him—who knew how to ride the reactionary swell. He had watched Ronald Reagan get elected governor of California by railing nonstop against Berkeley lefties. And he saw that the GOP could benefit from white rage over busing and open-housing policies, and that the one-third of AFL-CIO members who quietly supported Gov. George Wallace's race-baiting candidacy could be his instead. (Nixon's 1968 victory was assured when South Carolina's Sen. Strom Thurmond agreed to steer Southerners away from Wallace and toward the GOP; as president, Nixon repaid the favor by appointing right-wing judges and bogging down integration efforts.)

Liberal elites and the press thought Nixon tacky and uncouth. But, as the old William Blake aphorism has it, the tigers of wrath were wiser than the horses of instruction. Behind the scenes, Kevin Phillips, a young Nixon strategist, convinced the boss that Republicans could piggyback on popular resentment of cultural elites to create a new electoral majority. It was perfect: Nixon, after all, couldn't veer left on economics to win over the white working class—his corporate paymasters wouldn't hear of it. But he *could* woo them on social issues. Noted one aide: “Patriotic themes to counter depression will get response from unemployed.”

Perlstein points to a *New York Times* photo of a stockbroker and pipe-fitter

joining forces to clobber a hippie at an antiwar rally with—yes—an American flag. That was Nixon's vision for an emerging Republican majority. (Indeed, Nixon would surely approve of modern-day Republicans who prefer to harp on flag pins and Sen. Barack Obama's former pastor

than to dwell on economic affairs.)

But *Nixonland* also provides evidence that this strategy doesn't always work, that coalitions built purely on resentment have their limits. In the 1970 elections, Nixon waged an all-out anti-hippie campaign that, he hoped, would finally allow the GOP to retake Congress. Vice President Spiro Agnew toured the country foaming over the “parasites of passion” in the antiwar movement. But it failed miserably, as voters were much too worried about economic issues to care. The *New York Times* interviewed a Teamster who thought the National Guard was “100 percent right in Kent State” but was still voting Democratic because of the slowdown in the construction industry.

Nixon, of course, had better luck in 1972. But here, too, it's hard to sort out how much his victory owed to the cultural rift he created, as opposed to other factors. Part of what makes *Nixonland* so compelling is that it offers support for any number of readings. Yes, Nixon won over AFL-CIO leader George Meany, who despised the peaceniks, postgrads and feminists within the Democratic Party. But McGovern himself was also a mind-bogglingly inept candidate, who, as Perlstein reminds us, once cut an ad in which he actually berated a black worker worried about layoffs in the defense industry. And McGovern was the Democratic nominee partly because Nixon's stream of dirty tricks had flushed stronger candidates like Sen. Edward Muskie out of the race.

Nixon, moreover, benefited massively from his ability to lie through his teeth without reprisal—as when he claimed he was ending the war even as he ramped up his depraved bombing campaign against Cambodia and North Vietnam. For their part, mainstream liberals in the '70s were often absurdly high-minded in response, believing voters would surely see through Nixon's falsehoods. The press, meanwhile, was cowed: When news anchor Walter Cronkite tried to do a segment on the Watergate scandal, his bosses at CBS dialed it down after getting mau-maued by Nixon's goons.

All told, Perlstein has written an endlessly illuminating account of how, exactly, Nixon teased out a cultural divide in American life that persists to this day—a wound that Republicans keep jabbing in order to win. But elections are always multifaceted affairs, and observers can rarely agree on just why this or that party prevailed. The rise of conservatism in the United States owed to any number of factors: labor's decline, business' growing ability to act as a unified class, the birth of right-wing media, the fact that Republicans promised solutions for problems like crime and stagflation that had left Democrats helpless. It's a messy story.

Still, even if *Nixonland* tells only part of that tale, it's a crucial part, and Perlstein tells it so well—and so vividly—that his book is utterly essential for understanding the modern American political landscape. ■

TELEVISION

P.O.V.: A Home For Homeless Films

By Pat Aufderheide

PO.V. IS ONE of those occasional reminders that public broadcasting matters. Every year, like its complementary series Independent Lens, P.O.V. brings before national audiences the artists, perspectives and films that otherwise would find no home on television. The series' programmers work with a host of partners to use the films as launch pads for serious discussions.



Kazuhiko Yamauchi shows off one of his posters in *Campaign*, a documentary airing this summer on P.O.V. on PBS.

Started by a handful of '60s media activists, the series—which stands for “point of view”—has evolved into a leading showcase for the best independent documentaries available internationally. Series Executive Director Simon Kilmurry says, “We celebrate the documentary filmmaker as an artist.” Each one of the 19 films in the series this year is worthy of attention, both for what it says and how it says it.

The series launches on June 24 with *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North*. It's told by Katrina Browne, who is a member of one of the oldest families in New England, the DeWolfs, and who is also, like many of her well-educated relatives, a cleric. So when she discovers that her family's wealth and station were created through the slave trade—and indeed that the entire economy of the region was anchored in the bloody traffic—it becomes a moral issue for her.

We travel to Ghana with Katrina and several other descendants of the slave-trading family, to the dungeons in which enslaved Africans spent their last days on their home continent. And we travel to American museums, where any notion that the North wasn't fully complicit in the trade that fueled the South's economy is thoroughly debunked.

But the most interesting part is watching DeWolf family members slowly owning the problem. Privilege is powerful, and some family members want to take refuge in the notion of their own merit; others want to flee from the sorrow of

recognition; still others struggle with helplessness. But in the end, a family conversation begins—about taking responsibility for the reality of the past rather than gilding it over with myths. What could have been just another bath in liberal guilt becomes a frank and fascinating examination into the ways that the privileged make their peace with inequality.

Traces of the Trade has spurred provocative conversations at festivals between advocates and opponents of reparations, among whites, and between African Americans. Its TV debut could provide an opportunity for broader and deeper dialogue—at a timely moment, when the national elections have brought race back into focus.

P.O.V.'s documentaries are richly varied in style and substance, even when they focus on similar topics, such as elections. Consider director Katy Chevigny's *Election Day* (July 1), which takes us to ground level during the day of the presidential election 2004, in venues as diverse as South Dakota and Florida. Chevigny's well-established *vérité* style reveals the profound stake that citizens across the country have in the voting process.

Director Kazuhiko Soda's *Campaign* (July 29) whisks us to Japan, where we follow the campaign of a nowhere man who fronts for the ruling party and whose fate reveals not only the venal nature of institutional politics, but also their human cost.

This season also showcases two films with distinctly different takes on health-

care. **Critical Condition** (Sept. 30) is about what it means to be one of the 47 million Americans without health insurance. Director Roger Weisberg, a veteran television producer who regularly takes on tough topics, such as American inequality, doesn't just put a face on this issue—he brings in the whole body. In the tradition of journalist Edward R. Murrow, Weisberg tells truths that afflict the comfortable, couched in fundamental American values of fairness and accountability.

Far from that journalistic approach, director Joanna Rudnick, a member of the Kartemquin Films group (*Hoop Dreams*, *The New Americans*), tells a personal story of cutting-edge dilemmas in medical care with **In the Family** (Oct. 7). Rudnick has been diagnosed with a gene that predisposes her to breast cancer. Should she opt for pre-emptive surgery or hold out to have a baby before protecting her own future?

P.O.V. also brings to its American audience a remarkable range of international

documentaries. Among my favorites of P.O.V.'s international selections is **9 Star Hotel** (July 22), a simply made but riveting work. Israeli director Ido Haar followed Palestinian workmen who sneak across borders to work on the construction of an Israeli settlement in Palestinian land, and gives us a gritty insider's look at their lives.

They consider themselves lucky to have work, and regret that soon they'll no longer be able to risk prison or death to get to work because, within months, the wall dividing Israeli from Palestinian will make sneaking across impossible. The camera stays with them, sometimes jerkily, through raids, police chases, working days and evening fireside gossip.

Once back in the abandoned container they call home during the week, they talk about employers, girlfriends and rumors of the good life in Jordan. This simple chronicle of the terms of work for the Palestinian poor is filled with sharp ironies, and the director wisely chooses to let us discover them for ourselves.

Another must-watch is **Up the Yangtze** (Oct. 14), Canadian director Yung Chang's eye-opening look at Chinese modernization through the eyes of a teenage worker on a luxury riverboat. (I celebrated this film when it debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January, and it's thrilling to see it on television so quickly.)

Two other international documentaries are worth a look this summer. **Belarusian Waltz** (Aug. 12) is director Andrzej Fidyk's look at brutal Belarus politics through the lens of an outrageous protester against despotic rule, who uses comedy and street theater against a dictatorial state. Meanwhile, **The Judge and the General** (by directors Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco, on Aug. 19) chronicles the story of the judge who tried Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet.

P.O.V. isn't only a terrific case for public television, it's also a great case for owning a digital video recorder. Like much of the public television programming that's chewier than, say, "Antiques Roadshow,"

[art space]



British artists Gilbert & George have collaborated for more than four decades to create provocative work that aims to reach beyond the ivory tower. They call their philosophy "Art for All."

Most renowned for their large-scale pictures and photomontages, Gilbert & George's art explores life, death, sex, religion—and bodily functions. Their images range from the abstract to the idyllic to the profane and often incorporate their own bodies, which they refer to as "living sculptures."

A retrospective spanning the artists' careers—their first in more than 25 years—is on display through Sept. 1 at the Milwaukee Art Museum, one of just three North American venues on an international tour.

Learn more at www.mam.org.

—Mark Berlin



WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

In War Journal: My Five Years in Iraq (Simon and Schuster, June), "NBC News" correspondent Richard Engel recounts his frustration and bewilderment with rank-and-file American troops, including this experience from March 2004:

As I was waiting at a checkpoint outside the convention center in the Green Zone, I watched an American soldier almost shoot dead an Iraqi man standing next to me. I was lined up with other reporters and Iraqi guests between two rows of concertina wire at Checkpoint 3. We were waiting for three American soldiers to call us forward to be inspected and patted down for bombs.

The Iraqi man was in his 40s and wearing a white *dishdasha*, the flowing pajama robe common in rural areas of the Middle East. He broke out of the line and started walking to the American troops.

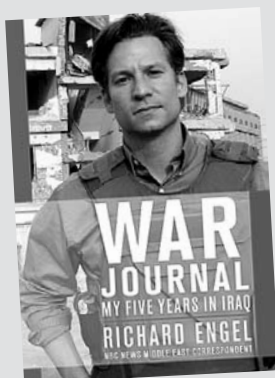
"Stop right there," a soldier yelled at him. But the man didn't stop. He kept advancing toward the soldiers. "Get your hand out of your pocket!" the soldier yelled, louder, more emphatically. The man's right hand was tucked into the pocket of his *dishdasha*.

The soldier raised his M-4 rifle at the man, who was now about 20 feet from the checkpoint and still advancing. "Get your fucking hand out of your fucking pocket!" the soldier screamed.

"Wait! Wait!" an old Iraqi man yelled in English, waving his arms. He rushed up and grabbed the man in the *dishdasha* by the shoulders.

"He is deaf!" the old man told the soldiers. The man in the white robe was also missing his right arm. His empty sleeve was fastened to his right pocket with a safety pin. He couldn't have moved it even if he'd heard the soldier yelling at him.

"Tell him he has got to be more careful!" barked the soldier, lowering his M-4. "This stupid haji doesn't know how close he was to getting smoked."



P.O.V. is not always programmed at the most convenient time for viewing. In some places, the series isn't carried at all. And public TV rarely runs repeats. (Hello, take a lesson from HBO!)

This season, P.O.V. will re-broadcast some of its more popular hits—*Lomax the Songhunter* (Sept. 2) about the musical preservationist Alan Lomax—as well as revive a classic—*Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music* (Aug. 5), fresh from 1969, the same era that brought us *Don't Look Back* and *Gimme Shelter*.

Mark your calendars, set your DVR or VCR, and bookmark the P.O.V. website—where, by the way, you can also comment on each of the films and talk with others about them. ■

BOOKS

Our Imperfect Unions

By David Moberg

PICK ALMOST ANY metric—fraction of workers in unions, lag of pay behind productivity increases, growing hours of work, rising economic insecurity—and it's obvious that American workers and their unions are in trouble. Now, two strongly argued and richly informative new books offer perspectives from the left about how the labor movement got into this fix and what can be done.

In *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Or-*

ganized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice (University of California), Bill Fletcher Jr., a veteran union official and leftist activist, and Fernando Gapasin, a former academic and central labor council president, call for a new "social justice unionism." And in *U.S. Labor in Trouble and Transition: The Failure of Reform from Above, the Promise of Revival from Below* (Verso), Kim Moody, founder of the *Labor Notes* newsletter and an educator, argues for a "democratic social movement unionism."

Just as their reform ideas are similarly named, the authors offer broadly comparable solutions, emphasizing a more militant, democratic, visionary and inclusive labor movement that is simultaneously more internationalist in outlook and more rooted in local communities. Both books view the labor movement as hamstrung by organizational forms and an ideology that takes a narrow approach to union goals, fails to recognize how class conflict is an inescapable fact of capitalist life and avoids any thought of how society might move beyond capitalism.

But some small differences in substance and tone exist between the two books. For example, Fletcher and Gapasin are slightly more upbeat and generous to those they criticize. They emphasize race and gender issues, and provide more detailed reporting on recent changes, including the split in the AFL-CIO. Moody, on the other hand, delves more deeply into the economic framework for the labor movement and the history of grassroots reform efforts.

Neither book portrays the AFL-CIO under President John Sweeney's reform team—or the split-off Change to Win unions—as offering satisfactory solutions to labor's crisis. Moody sees both as failures of reform from above—in contrast with the upsurge from below, which he views as the only road to progress. Fletcher and Gapasin show more sympathy to Sweeney's efforts and more understanding of the obstacles he faced (such as the failure of unions to agree on a stronger role for a labor federation to play). In general, they offer a more nuanced view of how unions and their leaders—even some rank-and-file reformers—become conservative, and argue against simply

blaming “mis-leaders” for problems.

Yet both books strongly criticize contemporary union leaders, especially SEIU President Andy Stern, whom they portray as stifling internal democracy and attempting to develop partnerships with businesses, in an era where capitalists are even less reliable partners.

The authors do diverge on some points. Fletcher and Gapasin see neoliberal—or radical free market—policies driven by globalization as a major threat to workers and unions. In some ways, Moody downplays the challenge of globalization, even as he writes about forces of global competition driving businesses to squeeze workers.

Moody argues that industrial production remains substantial and that the decline in manufacturing jobs results primarily from new technology. Implicitly, he faults union leaders’ weak defense as much as the force of a corporate/conservative assault for workers’ financial setbacks.

Yet offshoring remains a credible threat to most manufacturing workers. And even organizing remaining manufacturing workers—crucial as it may be—would not directly transform the lives of most Americans who now are in the service sector.

Union power in industries such as transportation and logistics could be strategically significant as a way to use union power to help organize other sectors, but even a revived auto workers’ union would likely not have the same broad social impact it did after World War II.

Moody’s emphasis on manufacturing and direct power at work also contrasts with Fletcher and Gapasin’s analysis. They argue that since class conflict ranges far beyond the workplace, unions must go beyond it as well, especially by creating stronger local institutions (such as turning existing central labor union councils into broader working peoples’ assemblies).

All three authors write that unions must include more women and people of color among their leaders, and Fletcher and Gapasin in particular argue that unions should not rely on economic appeals alone. While widening the scope of labor and developing new, more diverse leaders is crucial, it remains easier to develop broad solidarity over universal political and economic objectives that

advance all workers.

Both books also share the argument that the labor movement needs a politically left vision. But Fletcher and Gapasin acknowledge that “the left” in the United States is at least as much in crisis as the labor movement. More ideologically left leaders might be more militant, democratic, internationalist or inclusive than conservative leaders, but unions can play only a limited role in going beyond capitalism—mainly by providing opportunities for workers to learn from collective action.

The challenge for American unions will be increasingly political (shifting away from the crumbling private welfare state to more social, universal and progressively financed programs, for example). European labor movements have survived better, in part, by relying more heavily on politics and government. And despite the enthusiasm by all three authors for localized union power, the European experience suggests that centralized union power is also needed, so long as it does not come at the expense of workers’ direct engagement and union democracy.

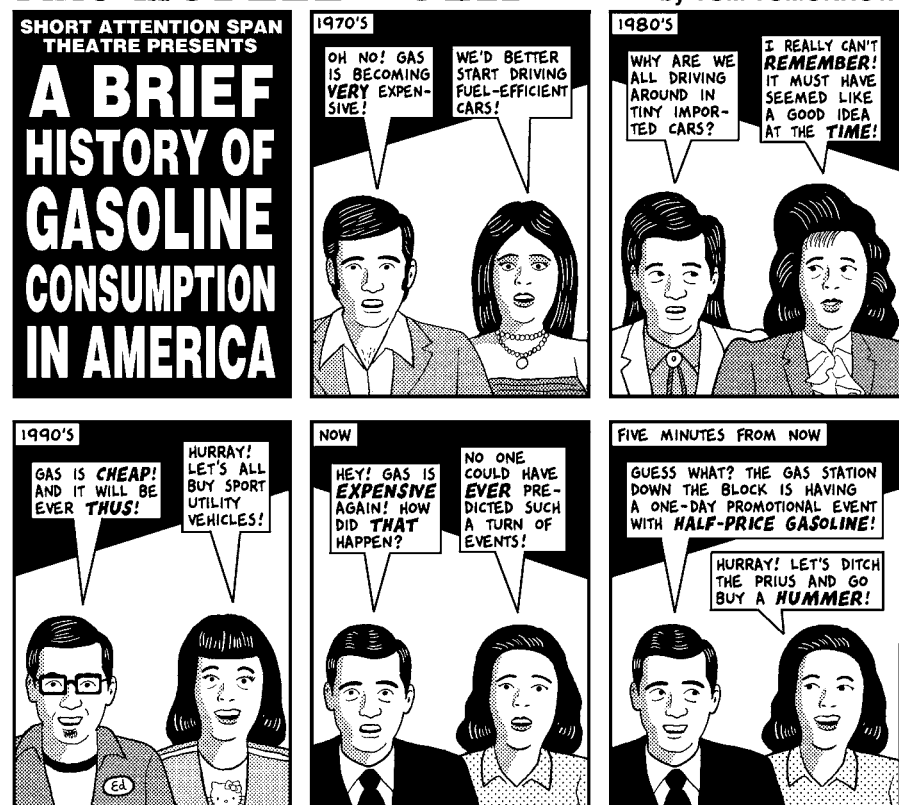
Fletcher and Gapasin advocate going beyond forming labor and community alliances to create what they describe as sociopolitical blocs of like-minded constituencies. As many on the left have for decades, Moody argues for a labor party, but he never adequately addresses why such efforts are continually frustrated in the American political system.

Both books acknowledge that their strategies may take a long time or, in Moody’s case, rely on a completely unpredictable social upsurge. And despite their efforts, both fail to explain why (beyond racial divisions) so many American workers now seem very cautious, or even conservative.

Even the most progressive union leaders must balance these long-term challenges with immediate demands—such as how to organize the next workplace or negotiate a new contract when the employer is threatening to move to Mexico. But those immediate actions, even for success in the short term, must also build for a long-range transformation along the lines that Fletcher, Gapasin and Moody ably and provocatively advocate. ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



BY TERRY J. ALLEN

On AIDS, Wright Is Wrong



THE GOVERNMENT LIED about inventing the HIV virus as a means of genocide against people of color," the Rev. Jeremiah Wright said in an April 2003 sermon.

By giving credence to this conspiracy theory, Wright undermines the good work he has done to fight the AIDS pandemic, by encouraging his flock to get tested and educating them about the disproportionate toll on African Americans.

The AIDS-as-U.S. plot—like the 9/11 Truthers' mental contortions—gives order to a world that can be cruelly random and meaningless. These theories are not wrong because they are profoundly skeptical of Washington; they are wrong because they take reasonable premises and march them over the cliff of irrational conclusions.

But the AIDS conspiracy theory is not just irrational, it is murderous. When you see a disease as a genocidal plot, it is a short step to believing that the drugs that alleviate it and the safe sex that prevents it are also part of the plot. This dangerous nonsense has caused unfathomable death and misery.

America's failures in the realm of AIDS are horrible enough: Fueled by racism, homophobia and religious lunacy, Washington allocated far too little funding, far too late, to research, prevention and treatment, both at home and abroad. In the developing world, the Bush administration based its policy on religion rather than medicine when it dispensed abstinence advice instead of condoms.

Another U.S. export—a group of

U.S.-based denialists—has become a global menace. Based on its theories, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki openly questioned the link between HIV and AIDS. Mbeki also condoned the whacko theories of his minister of health, Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang, who advocated treating the disease with garlic and beets. AIDS spread and flourished under their criminally myopic watch.

Conspiracy theories thrive on the difficulty of proving a negative and the inane assumption that the possible is equivalent to the actual.

"It's certainly possible," writes author William Blum in May's *CounterPunch* newsletter, "that the disease [AIDS] arose as a result of Defense Department experiments, and then spread as an unintended consequence."

What the hell does that mean? That it cannot be proven impossible, or that it actually happened?

It is also possible that the U.S. government deployed leprechauns to infiltrate the minds of sleeping Americans to urge them to buy SUVs. Possible? Prove it isn't.

The premise—that the Bush administration is in league with devious and greedy oil companies—is sound. The conclusion that leprechauns are responsible cannot be disproved, only countered by a rational worldview based on fact and evidence.

People believe all sorts of irrational crap: that God planted fossils to test faith; that the moon landing never happened; that the Bush administration attacked the Pentagon and twin towers; that some old white guy in the sky knows when teenage boys spank the monkey, and cares enough to condemn them to eternal hellfire.

Wright is not alone in his irrational-

ity about AIDS. The Rev. Jerry Falwell named God, rather than the government, as the perp, ranting that the disease is a divine plague sent to punish homosexuals and American society.

Falwell relied on the Bible. Wright cited both the ravings of celebrity quack Leonard Horowitz and the fatally real abuses of the Tuskegee experiment—a Public Health Service study that withheld treatment from a group of African Americans infected with syphilis so researchers could trace the disease's natural progression to death. The 40-year experiment ended in 1972.

That case, and others, provide hard evidence of endemic personal and institutional racism. But they do not prove Horowitz's conclusion that "AIDS is a genocidal weapon profitably effecting population control [that was created by] ... U.S. government agents, collaborating with the drug industry." Horowitz also promotes "intelligent design" and calls on Biblical "blood purity" laws to condemn vaccinations and skin tests for tuberculosis.

Horowitz's mutterings aside, Wright is right that U.S. government policies have so disproportionately disadvantaged blacks that a metaphorical use of the term "genocide" is warranted. But horrific as they are, the deadly effects of racism—evidenced in poverty, overimprisonment, poor healthcare, and corporate and government bias toward funding treatments for diseases of the rich—are not the same as planned genocide.

Wright cogently condemned America's history of racist injustice. But on AIDS, he was terribly wrong. ■

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Press Moguls

Continued from back page

ally, part of our language”—we segue into a segment on how the Olympics makes news, and I sense a pattern emerging.

So I'm off to the real Orientation Theater, sure that it will divulge the real nature of news.

I am soon oriented toward the core belief that news is made up of mind-numbingly banal binary oppositions: Birth/Death; War/Peace; Hate/Love. On-screen commentators offer up similar anodyne formulas, as does our voice-over narrator, "CBS Morning News" anchor Charles Osgood. He strings together sonorous syllogisms that signify very nearly nothing, e.g.

"Facts come first, then ideas, then ideals," and "Information is where liberty starts."

Such billowing wordplay isn't coming across, literally, as part of our language. Still, as the lights come up, it sets off one nearby patron.

"I like how they have all this leftist propaganda," sneers a guy in knee-length checkered shorts and a West Virginia baseball cap.

At the computer kiosk outside Orientation Theater it dawns on me that my pedestrian quest for literal meaning is missing the Newseum's main point: It is not a memorial to news, or newsgathering, but, rather, a lavish, atrium-enhanced, multi-screen advertisement that extols slogans, personalities and—most of all—the concept of press ownership. For here at the

touchscreen kiosk, visitors can imbibe every Hearst-branded celebration ... of the Hearst brand. In a filmed statement, the company CEO praises his corporation's excellent taste in partnering with the Newseum. A different button yields a tour through Hearst Corp.'s many media properties. Yet another gives a history of the company's excellent track record of media consolidation.

Since I'm a former Hearst employee, I'm eager to see how the mother company—which in 2000 offloaded its flagship property, the *San Francisco Examiner*, six years after a bitter strike paralyzed it for months—is gilding its past for the Newseum crowd.

We learn that the company launched itself into the modern news era when media mogul William Randolph Hearst took control of the *Examiner* from his dad in 1887. We catch a discreet reference to the elder Hearst being elected to the U.S. Senate, but there's little mention of William's colorful political interests: his role plumping for the imperialist Spanish-American War, or his lengthy, vicious career as strike-breaker and Red-baiter.

Instead, we get a drumbeat recitation of the properties Hearst acquired, and the technological domains he conquered: "By the 1920s, Hearst had 28 newspapers nationwide."

His papers were the first to feature color comics!


He bought up magazines by the bushelful!

Radio stations, too!

So it is throughout the Newseum's 250,000 square feet of exhibition space. We see a distinct premium placed on the news industry's largeness, and precious little recognition of its purpose.

Oh, there is, of course, plenty of First Amendment talk, and fond looks back at when journalists clashed with notions of executive branch prior restraint. But for all the heroic talk of the press' role in preserving liberty and democracy, there's no reckoning with the overtly political ends that a commercial press pursues.

Even less is there any examination of why we have a commercial press in the first place, or how frenetic consolidation of media properties disfigures the public's stake in journalism.



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Is there bias in the news media?

Yes

No

TRUTH | LIES

Should the press be able to criticize the government during wartime?

Yes

No

Searching for mind-numbingly banal binary oppositions? The Newseum is the place for you.

When you take the elevator up to the fifth floor and work your way down the vast exhibition areas, for instance, you first encounter an exhibition on News History (mislabelled, in a Huxley-esque typo on a sign next to the elevator, “New History”). There, the kiosk-vertisement is for NewsCorp, which had the vision to grace the unsuspecting world with Fox News.

Guiding us through the many, many holdings of NewsCorp is Fox News correspondent Shepard Smith. He reports with the barest undertone of televisual-approved irony that he and the doltish “Simpsons” newscast Kent Brockman are “employed by the same company.”

Then we get the same, potted history of Rupert Murdoch’s vulgar news-conquering ways that we saw in Hearstland: “It all began,” Shepard reverently intones, “with one man’s dedication to the news.” New History, indeed.

In the accompanying exhibit, we see many more broad-stroke slogans: “News Helps Incite Rebellion” for the Revolutionary War—a period safely distant enough in time for popular dissent to be treated as a virtue. For abolitionism, a strangely more detached slogan: “Slavery Divides a Nation.” By the onset of World War II, we are again at the point of baginess-beyond-signification. “The Story of the Century Unfolds: War Was, and Is, Big News.” You don’t say.

Tucked into a back wall display there’s a small exhibit under the heading “Who Owns What”? Here we learn that “Mergers and Takeovers Create Multimedia Giants.” The explanatory text, like in many of the museum displays, is irritatingly highlighted in fake yellow marker, as if put together

by a bored and distracted college sophomore. Here the discerning yellow mark falls on the did-you-know factoid that Disney, once known for cartoon renderings of cuddly mice, is today “a multimedia conglomerate that typifies the changing face of news media ownership.”

And how do such incongruities come to pass? Read on, dear visitor: “Today, chances are that your daily newspaper—once locally owned—is owned by a large company in a city many miles away. Likewise for your network television affiliates. Why? Because the news media yield profit and power.” You don’t say.

Elsewhere, the sophomoric highlighting becomes pernicious. In a look back at 19th century “Press Barons,” the highlighted text reads “Publishers and editors of the era could fight corruption and influence government policy.” That’s nice. But below, in unhighlighted, boring black-and-white, we learn that “many of them used (or abused) that power to promote their own agendas.” A social universe, crammed into a two-word parenthetical.

That indignity was compounded by the aphorism our sophomore curator selected for the display, A.J. Liebling’s old saw about freedom of the press being guaranteed only to those who own one. This, so far as I could tell, was Liebling’s only appearance in the cavernous display areas—and small wonder, since he held all press owners and publishers in principled contempt. The place would have greatly benefited from his far sturdier aphorism about the press’ mission being to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, but perhaps the Newseum curators ran out of wallspace

after carving “Free speech not only lives, it rocks!”—the sober appraisal of “television personality” Oprah Winfrey after her 1998 acquittal on libel charges when she dared cast doubt on the safety of the American hamburger.

The Newseum spectacle doesn’t end there, of course: A guard tower and cement segments of the Berlin Wall (Cold War makes news, too, you see); part of an immolated tower from the 9/11 attacks (“hate,” you recall, is part of what makes news); interactive studios where visitors can pretend to be newscasters. (Disclosure: My wife, the blogger formerly known as Wonkette, donated a pair of her slippers to the place. Curators asked for her pajamas, but she struck a rare blow for Newseum tastefulness in only vouchsafing them footwear).

Of the “4-D” time-travel movie through “the digital news stream,” the less said the better, save that candor compels me to report that the experience left me feeling no younger; indeed, quite the opposite.

No, the most lasting takeaway from my Newseum tour came the next morning, when I absently tuned in to ABC’s “This Week With George Stephanopoulos,” in masochist search of more election-driven pundit blather. I learned, to my shock, that the show is now permanently housed in the Newseum studio. To my further astonishment, after one commercial cut-away, we saw B-roll tape with the show’s logo emblazoned on a banner right next to the stone-carved rendering of the First Amendment on the facility’s only concrete exterior wallspace.

What is sponsoring what is, in other words, anybody’s guess. ■



freedom of the PRESS MOGULS



BY CHRIS LEHMANN

THE NEWSEUM, THE LATEST addition to Washington's sprawling, preening, self-singing monument-memorial complex, may boast a constitutional amendment engraved on its \$450 million façade, and an outsized collection of press arcana, but it beckons to the visitor in the same fashion that the nightly news does to the suburban homeowner: You go downstairs and watch TV. Or rather, you begin your tour at the Hearst Corporation-sponsored Orientation Theater at the concourse level, opposite the Wolfgang Puck-catered food court.

However—since I follow directions poorly—I sit down in the

wrong theater. It is showing a glowing retrospective on sports journalism, and it takes me some time to realize my error. The hero hymned on screen is Roone Arledge—the famous former director of ABC's sports coverage, who seamlessly transitioned into the network's news director. Perhaps, I think, we are watching the corporate-newsmasters-of-indeterminate-portfolio segment of the documentary "What Is News?"

However, after a verbally mangled paean to Arledge's titanic genius—former ABC sportscaster Jim McKay says that "the words, 'the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat'" (the slogan Arledge dreamt up for "ABC's Wide World of Sports") had "become, liter-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46